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ABSTRACT

This document describes a collaborative learning project that investigated how theater and improvisational drama can help adult learners to develop basic literacy and English language abilities. Three teachers, working with an average of 10 students each for 6 months, conducted classes to increase students' skills in improvisation, creative thinking, imagination, scriptwriting, and individual and group performance. They improvised skits and plays, worked on writing as scripts what they had created, then read and rehearsed their work and performed it in public. Teachers' activities included a 20-hour orientation , a biweekly teacher-sharing, and the keeping of a detailed record of their work . Following an Introduction (Section I), skits and plays developed by the students are included in this document. Section II, Scenes and Skits, contains the following: "The Accident," "The Vacuum Cleaner," "The Auto Mechanic," "Apartment for Rent," "The Broken Refrigerator," "Family Portrait," and "Out of the Darkness." Contents of Section III, Favorite Tales Reenacted, are as follows: "The Big Bad Wolf Gets Therapy," "Gretel's Miserable Adventure," "The Old Woman Who Lived in the Shoe with Too Many Children," "The Morning After," "To Find a Prince," "Dumbo's Different," and "Jack Faces the Giant." Section IV includes the following Short Plays: "The Decision," "Reflections of One's Self," "The Trial of Pandora," and "The Jones' American Dream." (KC)

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Setting the Stage for Literacy
An Anthology of Adult Student Scripts

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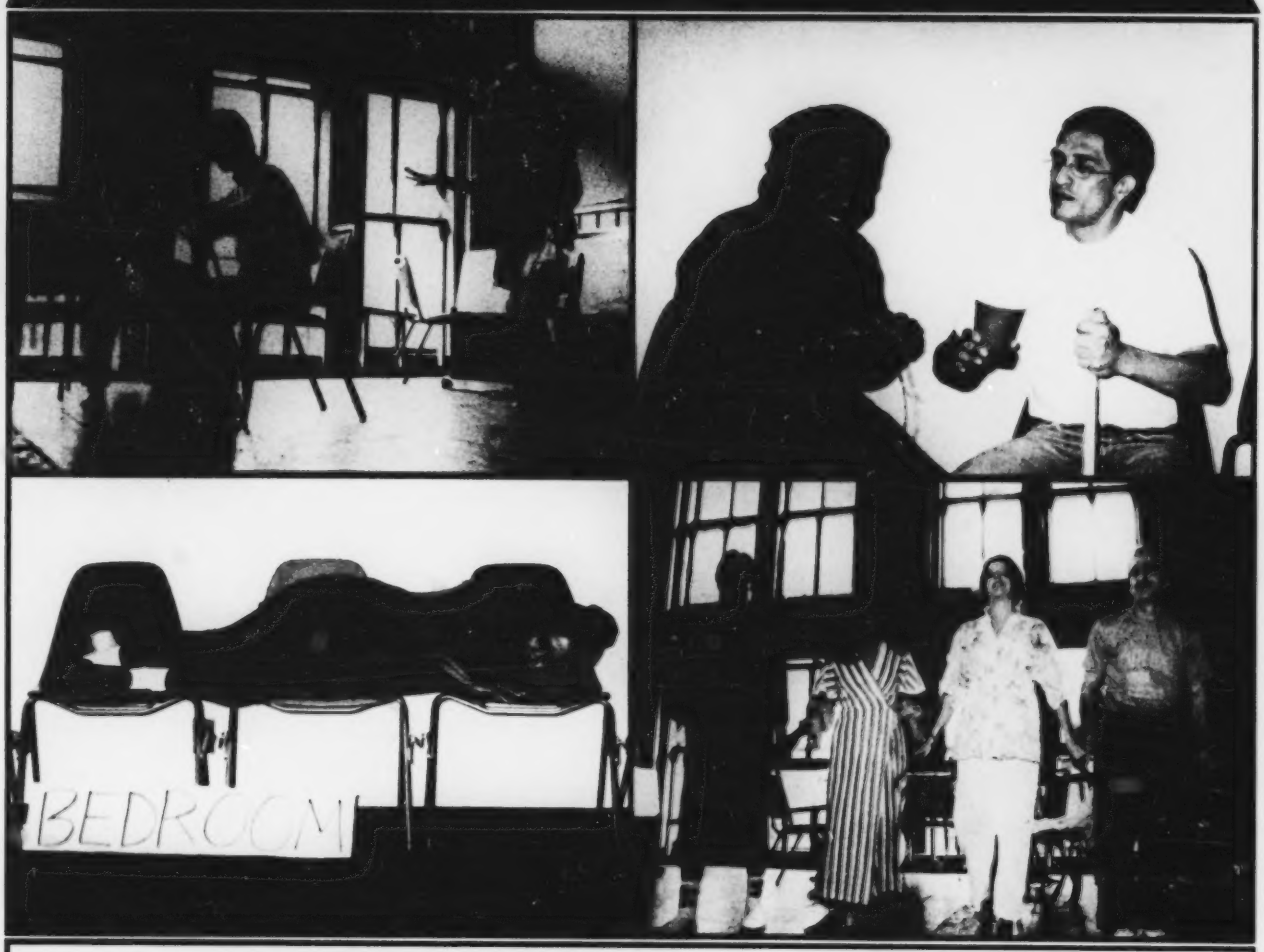
Summer 1994 Vol.1, No.1

SETTING THE STAGE



FOR LITERACY

An Anthology of Adult Student Scripts

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Setting the Stage for Literacy

An Anthology of Adult Student Scripts

Volume 1, Number 1

Summer, 1994

Published as a cooperative project of the
Public Library of Brookline and the Adult Literacy
Resource Institute of Roxbury Community College and
The University of Massachusetts, Boston
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Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

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Jerry Cirillo

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COVER

Cover photographs counter clockwise from the top left are:

1. Lorenza Michielli as Josie, Amad Lababi as Patrick and Nicola La Polla as Paolo in "The Jones' American Dream," performed at Hubbard Hall, North End Union, Boston, MA. Photographer; Roger Gordy.

2. Andrea Traboux and Fernando Solano in an improvisation of a family picnic at the Coolidge Corner Branch Library, Brookline, MA. Photographer; Paul Katz.

3. Maria Barros in the "Self-expression" monologue, performed at the Coolidge Corner Branch Library, Brookline, MA. Photographer; Paul Katz.

4. Amad Lababi, Betzaida Barreto, Lorenza Michielli and Nicola La Polla take final bows after performance of "The Jones' American Dream" at Hubbard Hall, North End Union, Boston, MA. Photographer; Roger Gordy.

Cover design by Roger Gordy.

Financial assistance for this special project is made possible by federal funds administered through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Editorial Committee thanks Sharon Carey (Project Place Center), Kelly Keough, (North End Union), and Elsa McCann (Hotel Employees/Local 26 ESL Program), teachers in the three adult learning programs that participated in "Setting the Stage for Literacy" for sharing their theater experience during the project. Through their work, they helped enrich the learning experiences of the participants in their respective programs.

Very special thanks to Shelley Quezada, Program Consultant, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners who recognized the unique potential of this project. The committee also recognizes Kay Hagemann, Director of the Educational Program for Local 26, for her constant support, faith and expertise in teaching adult learners, Fiona Ritchie for sharing her teaching experience and enthusiasm with the project, Guillermo Rivera-Pagan, Executive Director of Project Place, and Dr. Robert Dello Russo, Executive Director of the North End Union, for their generous support throughout the program.

We would like to express our appreciation to Chuck Flaherty, Director of the Public Library of Brookline, Barbara Lewis and Cindy Battis for their administrative and technical assistance to the project.

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Introduction

Theatre is now widely accepted as an effective tool and a powerful ally in teaching and learning. This publication is the result of a collaborative learning project designed to investigate how theater and improvisational drama can help adult learners to develop their basic literacy and English language abilities. The "Setting the Stage for Literacy" project brought together adult learners and teachers in adult basic education in the Greater Boston area to explore how theater methods and techniques can provide a powerful set of language- and literacy-learning strategies and to utilize theater as an effective medium for adult new writers to convey their experiences.

The project was funded through a federal LSCA (Library Services and Construction Act) grant to the Public Library of Brookline and was jointly administered by the Director of the Brookline Library's Coolidge Corner branch (first Jerry Cirillo, then Deborah Abraham) and the Director of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute in Boston (David Rosen). James Emmanuel Roberts, former coordinator of the Publishing for Literacy Project at the A.L.R.I., was chosen to coordinate this project. An application process was begun, and three Boston adult basic education teachers with experience in theater were selected to

participate. They were: Sharon Carey, an ABE teacher at Project Place, a program that primarily serves homeless persons; Kelly Keough, a teacher of higher level ESL (English as a second language) at the North End Union; and Elsa McCann, a teacher of beginning level ESL at the workers' education program run by Local 26 of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union.

The project involved six months of intensive activity, in which each teacher worked with an average of ten students from January to June, 1994. In class, students and teachers did exercises designed to increase their skills in improvisation, creative thinking, imagination, scriptwriting, and individual and group performance. They improvised theatre skits and plays, worked on writing down as scripts what they had created, and then read and rehearsed their work in preparation for performance. These student-generated plays were performed at all three of the program sites and, in June, in a public performance at the Coolidge Corner Library.

Additional teachers' activities during the project included a 20-hour orientation/workshop, a bi-weekly teacher-sharing, and the keeping of a detailed record of their work with the students. At the bi-weekly sessions, the teachers, meeting together with the project coordinator, shared their experiences with improvisation, scriptwriting, and performance and offered peer encouragement and support.

The plays printed here represent most of the material improvised and developed by the students at the three programs. They range from short skits involving a couple of characters to one-scene theater pieces to a large multi-scene play. The photographs were taken at the various project performances and include photos of some of the silent improvisational exercises and skits which were presented at the performances but which, being without dialog, are not represented in the text of this collection.

We hope that adult basic education teachers and students enjoy reading these pieces and that, possibly, some will be inspired to explore the use of student-developed and improvisational drama in their own classrooms.

James Emmanuel Roberts,
Project Coordinator,
and Steve Reuys,
Project Advisory Committee member

SCENES AND SKITS

The Accident

by the Hotel Workers' ESL Class

Characters

Mickey Coons, a boy about 10 years old

Shopkeeper

Meter Reader

Driver

Mother of the boy, Justine Coons

Police Officer

EMT

several tenants (adults & children)

Scene

A one-way street in a city neighborhood. 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon. There is a corner store, a laundromat, and many apartment buildings. Several children are playing on the street and sidewalk, a meter reader walks by looking for illegally parked cars, and a few tenants come in and out of the buildings.

Child 1: Hey, Mickey, let's go to the park!

Mickey: Alright, but let's take our bikes.

Child 1: I have to get mine. Be right back.

Mickey: Watch this.....

(Mickey is on his bike riding with "no hands.")

.....I can ride with no hands!

(As the boy rides down the street a car is driving in the wrong direction....the driver hits the breaks, but cannot stop in time. The car hits the bicycle and the boy is thrown off. He lands on the windshield of the car and then bounces to the ground and rolls to the sidewalk. There is a loud screeching noise, a thump, a crash and then silence.)

Tenant 1: Oh my God! What was that?

Tenant 2: A child has been hit.

(Everyone walks toward the hurt child. The boy has started to moan and cry.)

Shopkeeper: I'll call an ambulance.

(The shopkeeper goes inside the store.)

Driver: My God, what have I done?

Tenant 2: Don't move him. Keep him still.

Meter Reader: His leg has been hurt.

Child 1: Is it Mickey? I'll get his mom.

Shopkeeper: We have to keep him warm. Take this blanket.

Driver: Take my coat. Where is the ambulance? It should be here by now.

Shopkeeper: It'll get here soon.

Tenant 2: You'll be alright. It's ok. Someone has gone to get your mother.

Meter Reader: Did someone say his name is Mickey?

Child 2: Yeah, his name is Mickey Coons.

Meter Reader: Mickey, you're O.K., everything will be just fine. It's O.K. Shhhh..... we are taking care of you. Don't worry.

(Child 1 comes back with the boy's mother.)

Mother: Where's my boy? What happened to my boy? Mickey!!

Tenant 2: He'll be alright ma'am. The ambulance is on its way.

Shopkeeper: Here it comes. You can hear it.

Mother: Why is it taking so long? My God, my baby, he's bleeding!!

(The Police arrive.)

Police Officer: Please back up folks. Give the child some air. Make room for the ambulance.

Tenant 1: How did this happen?

Driver: I don't know. The bike came from out of nowhere!

Child 2: You were driving the wrong way.

Driver: What?

Tenant 1: Didn't you know? This is a one-way street.

Driver: I didn't know. This is the first time I have been in this neighborhood.

(The Ambulance arrives.)

Shopkeeper: Phew! It's here!

Police: Stand back please.

(The EMT's bring a stretcher.)

EMT: Let's put a splint on his leg.

EMT: Are you his mother?

Mother: Yes.

EMT: How old is the child?

Mother: He's nine, almost ten years old.

EMT: Does he have any allergies?

Mother: No, not that I know of.

EMT: Any medical conditions we should know about?

Mother: No, but he does get frequent nosebleeds.

EMT: Thank you. If you would please follow us to the ambulance.

Driver: Will the boy be alright?

EMT: I think he'll be fine Ma'am, but we have to get him to the hospital quickly.

(The EMT's put the boy in the ambulance with his mother and they drive away.)

The Vacuum Cleaner

by the Hotel Workers' ESL Class

Characters

Customer

Salesperson

Scene

Customer's livingroom

(There is a knock at the door.)

Customer: Hello, who is it?

Salesperson: My name is *(insert name)* _____. I am from Magic Vacuum Cleaner Company.

Customer: What do you want?

Salesperson: I want to show you a new model that we carry.

Customer: Do you have an I.D.?

Salesperson: Yes, I do.

Customer: Ok, but just for a moment.

Salesperson: Thank you. I'm sure you will love this new model. It picks up dirt everywhere! You can use it to take dirt off of the rug, the walls, and even the corners.

Customer: That sounds good.

Salesperson: Here, let me show you. *(He/She dumps a bag of dirt on the floor.)*

Customer: Oh, my goodness! What are you doing? *(Sneezes)*

Salesperson: I'm just showing you how it works!

Customer: Well, I have allergies! *(Sneezes)*

Salesperson: No problem. This will be cleaned up in no time.

Customer: But, *(Sneezes)* I can't be around dust . *(Sneezes)*

Salesperson: Watch this vacuum cleaner go!

Customer: Please hurry! The dust is too much for me! *(Sneezes)*

Salesperson: You can use this vacuum cleaner for three months at no charge!

Customer: You mean three months free?

Salesperson: Yes, only after three months do you start payment!

Customer: What if I don't like it?

Salesperson: Then you can return it. No charge! It's a guarantee!

12.

ENDING ONE

Customer: Ok, I guess I'll take it.

Salesperson: Terrific! Now, here is the paperwork to fill out.

Customer: Where do I sign?

ENDING TWO

Customer: This is terrible! You have just made a mess in my house!

Salesperson: I'm sorry, ma'am. I'll clean it up.

Customer: No, just go away! Get out of here, you idiot!

The "Auto Mechanic"

by the Hotel Workers' ESL Class

Characters

Customer

Mechanic

Police Officer

Scene

A car at the side of a street

(The Customer tries to drive her car but it won't start. She tries several times, but it still won't start.)

Customer: Oh, no! What is wrong with this car? It won't start! I'll try it again. *(She tries to start it again.)* Darn it all! What am I going to do?

(Suddenly a mechanic appears and offers to help.)

Mechanic: Do you have a problem with your car?

Customer: Yes, it won't start.

Mechanic: Would you like some help? I am a car mechanic.

Customer: Oh, that's great!

(The mechanic goes underneath the car.)

Mechanic: Yes, I can see what your problem is. I'll fix it.

(The mechanic pulls at a few wires and then comes out from under the car.)

Mechanic: Let's try it again.

(The mechanic turns the key, and the car starts.)

Customer: Thank you so much!

Mechanic: You're welcome. *(The mechanic turns the car off and takes the keys.)* That will be $300 dollars please.

Customer: What? Are you joking? All you did was look at it!

Mechanic: Yes, but I fixed it. That will be $300 dollars please.

Customer: No! I won't pay you. You are asking for too much money.

Mechanic: Perhaps I am, but I do have your keys!!

(The mechanic dangles the keys in front of the customer.)

Mechanic: Do you want your keys back? Give me the money!

Customer: That's a dirty trick! I'll call the police!

(*The customer yells out for the police. A police officer enters.)*

Officer: What seems to be the problem here?

Customer: Officer, this person has stolen my car keys.

Mechanic: That is not true, Officer. I fixed her car and she will not pay me for my work.

Customer: That's because you want too much!

Mechanic: What would you have done if I did not help you?

Customer: I would have found an HONEST mechanic!

Officer: Now, just a moment here. Let's calm down and talk about this. How did you get the keys to her car?

(All talk simultaneously.)

Cutomer: I trusted him.

Mechanic: I trusted her.

Customer: I thought he was being nice.

Mechanic: I thought she wanted help.

Customer: Not for $300 dollars!

Mechanic: Mechánical help costs money.

Customer: You're a rotten fink..... you did not do any work!

(The customer grabs the keys from the mechanic.)

Mechanic: You're a cheapskate!

Officer: Oh, my goodness, what's going on?

(The customer get's in her car, starts the engine...)

Customer: Thank you for your help Officer. Everything is fine now. *(.....and she drives away.)*

Patricia Bonilla (Dominican Republic) as the landlord in the "Broken Refrigerator" scene. Xiu Yi Li (China) looks on. Paul Katz, photographer.

Patricia Bonilla (Dominican Republic) as the customer, Elsa Bahta (Eritrea) as the police officer, and Alex Leuman (Peru) as the mechanic in the "Auto Mechanic" scene. Paul Katz, photographer.

The "Family Photo" scene. Sitting: Patricia Bonilla (Dominican Republic). Seated: Pilar Bonilla (El Salvador), Pedro Bonilla (El Salvador), Fernando Solano (Columbia). Standing: Eddy Bonilla (Dominican Republic), Andrea Traboux (Dominican Republic), Kidan Tesfaizon (Eritrea). Paul Katz, photographer.

16.

Some of the Hotel Workers of Local 26 "Setting the Stage" participants. Front row: Yu Mon Zhen (China), Andrea Traboux (Dominican Republic), Elizabeth Castaneda (Peru), Law Chwengok (Burma), Cong Thi Truong (Vietnam), Pilar Bonilla (El Salvador), Niem Truong (Vietnam). Middle row: Kay Hagemann (Local 26), Kidan Tesfaizon (Eritrea). Back row: Pedro Bonilla (El Salvador), Eddy Bonilla (Dominican Republic), Fernando Solano (Columbia), Elsa McCann (Local 26). Roger Gordy, photographer.

Apartment for Rent

by the Hotel Workers' ESL Class

Characters

Tenant

Landlord

Scene

The Office of Grant Avenue Realty

Tenant: Hello. I'm here to ask about the apartment for rent.

Landlord: O.K., one moment.

Tenant: Is it still available?

Landlord: Yes.

Tenant: May I see it?

Landlord: Tell me what you are looking for first.

Tenant: Well, I am looking for a 3 or 4 bedroom apartment.

Landlord: Why? Do you have a family?

Tenant: Yes, I'm married with three children.

Landlord: Where are you from? What country?

Tenant: I am from Venezuela. Why do you ask?

Landlord: Is your wife from there too?

Tenant: No, but why do you want to know?

Landlord: Just wondering...

Tenant: May I see the apartment now?

Landlord: Well, I don't think it will be big enough for a family of 4.

Tenant: I would like to see it and decide for myself.

Landlord: Well, this is a bad time. Come back tomorrow.

Tenant: What time tomorrow?

Landlord: About 12:00.

Tenant: Ok, but before I go, how much is the rent?

Landlord: It's $1500.00 a month.

Tenant: That is very high. I don't think I can afford that. Good bye.

The Broken Refrigerator

by the Hotel Workers' ESL Class

Characters

Tenant

Landlord

Scene I

Tenant speaks into a telephone from his/her apartment on one side of the stage. The landlord in his office on the other side.

Scene II

The landlord's office

Scene 1

Tenant: Hello, This is Jose Suarez from apartment #10. May I speak with the landlord?

Landlord: Yes, this is the landlord. What do you want?

Tenant: My refrigerator is broken.

Landlord: Well, that's too bad. I can't help you right now.

Tenant: But I need my refrigerator to be working.

Landlord: Call me next week, I'm busy with other problems now.

Tenant: But.....

Landlord: Goodbye *(click)*

Scene 2

(Tenant knocks on the door,)

Landlord: Come in.

Tenant: Hello, I'm Jose Suarez from apartment #10. We just spoke on the telephone.

Landlord: Yeah, what did we talk about?

Tenant: My refrigerator is broken.

Landlord: Oh, yeah, I remember.

Tenant: I insist that you have it fixed today.

Landlord: What? What do you mean TODAY?

Tenant: In the lease it says you must provide me with a working refrigerator.

Landlord: Well, you are on the list, I'll have it fixed as soon as we have time.

Tenant: When will that be?

Landlord: I'm not exactly sure.

Tenant: You have to fix it today! Look at this!! *(He pulls out the lease and starts to read it.)* "The Apartment number #10 includes a working stove, oven, refrigerator, bathroom sink, toilet and shower. In the event that any of these items stop functioning, I, the landlord, agree to fix or arrange to have it fixed within 24 hours....." There! You see, you have to fix it right away!

Landlord: Now just hold on a minute, I'll fix your refrigerator!!..... but **I do have twenty four hours** according to the lease!.....Now, let me see ...*(He looks at his watch.)* ....it's now 3:00 p.m.....I have until 3:00 p.m. tomorrow afternoon to deal with your problem. So, go on, leave me alone. I'll fix it in good time.

Tenant: Thank you. The sooner, the better. *(He leaves.)*

Landlord: Pain in the neck.

Family Portrait

by the Hotel Workers' ESL Class

Characters

Mother

Father

4 Daughters

2 Sons

Photographer

Puppy

Scene

Family livingroom

Mother: Oh, my God! Today is the family photograph!

Father: Yes honey. Did you forgot?

1st D (Daughter) : Mom, can you brush my hair?

Mother: Yes honey.

Father: Honey! · Where is my comb?

Mother: I'll get it for you.

(She leaves to get a brush and comb.)

Photographer: Can we get started?

2nd D: I'm ready!

3rd D: Me too!

1st S: Wait! I need to tie my shoe.

Photographer: Don't worry. The camera won't see your shoe.

4th D: Mommy, did you iron this dress?

Mother: Yes, baby.

Father: Now let's settle down everybody.

Mother: I forgot my lipstick.

(Mother goes to next room.)

1st D: What about Ralphie?

2nd D: Oh, yah! Don't forget Ralphie!

1st S: I'll get him.

Photographer: Who is Ralphie?

Father: I don't know if we want the puppy in the picture.

2nd D: He's part of the family!

(Mother returns.)

Photgrapher: Excuse me, but I charge by the hour.

Mother: Don't worry. We'll pay you.

(The boys come out with the puppy following them.)

ALL: RALPHIE!!!! Here, Ralphie!!

(The children are very excited now.)

Father: Hold on. I'll take Ralphie in my lap. We have to keep him still.

Mother: Ok, are we ready for the picture?

ALL: Yes!

(Just as the Photographer takes the picture, Ralphie, the puppy, jumps off the father's lap and the moment is lost!)

Walter Williams, "Get Off the Bench" (Coolidge Corner Branch Library).

Walter Williams and Theresa Williams in "Stuck in the Mud". Roger Gordy, photographer.

Theresa Williams and Walter Williams in "Walking on Ice". Roger Gordy, photographer.

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Theresa Williams as a homeless woman. Paul Katz, photographer.

Theresa Williams. Roger Gordy, photographer.

Walter Williams and Theresa Williams in "Frosting a Chocolate Cake". Roger Gordy, photographer.

Walter Williams and Theresa Williams in "The Mirror" (Coolidge Corner Branch Library). Paul Katz, photography.

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Out of the Darkness

by Lael Morris

Characters

Character One

Shadow

Character One and Shadow are covered from head to toe with pieces of cloth.

Scene

An abandoned basement. The only ray of light comes from the cracks in the boards covering the windows. The walls are wet from the sweat of heat due to there being no air down there. But the characters in this play always feel cold. That's why they stay covered up.

Character One: (They rise in the morning.) Good Morning.

Shadow: What's so good about it?

Character One: Well, we awoke still in one piece. The rats could have nibbled at our limbs.

Shadow: I am sure they've had better meals.

Character One: (Sighs) Well it's nice to see that you're just as pleasant as always.

Shadow: (Snaps) What the hell do you expect. Look around you. There's not much to be pleasant about. Everything around us is so dark.

Character One: Except those rays of light coming from the cracks in the window.

Shadow: Well that means a whole lot, especially when there's so little of it.

Character One: You're no help. You're always looking for the worst like when I feel like I can accomplish things, you're right there saying, "No can do." You never want to see me do better.

Shadow: I really don't see how you can think about doing better from here.

Character One: There's always a way.

Shadow: Besides you always want to venture places you shouldn't be.

Character One: Well, how will I know if I am supposed to be there if I never try to get there. Somehow you always convince me not to go there.

Shadow: Well where is it that you want to go?

Character One: First I want to get out of here. Then we won't have any need for these coverings.

Shadow: Oh no. If we leave here and we take off the coverings, you'll know who I am and I'll know who you are.

Character One: So what's the big deal?

Shadow: I've never had to look at you and you never had to look at me.

Character One: Can't be that bad.

Shadow: Well, I am scared.

Character One: Scared of what?

Shadow: Of what I might find.

Character One: Well we have to face one another some day, why not today? Besides if we find something we don't like we can always come back.

(Character One walks toward the light and begins to talk. Shadow follows and repeats what Character One has to say)

Character One: Hi out there.

Shadow: Hi out there.

Character One: If you can hear me I need help.

Shadow: If you can hear me, I need help.

Character One: I've been down long enough and I want to get up.

Shadow: (Getting softer) I've been down long enough, and I want to get up.

Character One: I want to get up and do something.

Shadow: I want to get up and do something.

Character One: I am tired of feeling like dirt. I'm tired of being alone. I want to be part of the world again. Can you help me?

Shadow: I am tired of feeling like dirt. I'm tired of being alone. I want to be part of the world again. Can you help me?

Character One: You have to believe in order for this to work.

Shadow: Believe in what?

Character One: Believe in what? Believe that there's hope for us.

Shadow: I may not act like I believe in you but I do.

Character One: O.K. because I can't do this alone. You have to be with me on this all the way in order for it to work.

Shadow: For real. No more fighting you. Together we stand. Divided we fall.

Character One: O.K. let's do it. All we have to do is stand together and the world is ours.

(As they stand the doors unlock. The light gets brighter. The Shadow fades back while Character One starts unwrapping the covering. Underneath the covering there is a mask on Character One. Character One takes a step toward the light and starts the recovery from fear.)

FAVORITE TALES REENACTED

The Big Bad Wolf Gets Therapy

by The 1994 GED Class at Project Place

Characters

Dr. Ruth

George Wolf (speaks with Southern accent)

Scene

Dr. Ruth's Office

Wolf: Howdy, I'm George Wolf.

Doctor: I'm Dr. Ruth.

Wolf: Howdy, nice to meet you.

Doctor: How can I help you?

Wolf: I dunno. I never done this before.

Doctor: Why are you here?

Wolf: They said I had to come. After I got hit in the head by the woodsman. They said I need help. They said I needed therapy.

Doctor: What kind of therapy?

Wolf: Emotional I guess. I got problems. I don't like people. I don't like pigs. I don't like girls that dress in red and run through the woods. I don't like people.

Doctor: Wanna talk about it?

Wolf: I'll try.

Doctor: How did your problems start?

Wolf: First time I got in trouble it was about them pigs. I chased them around and tried to eat them.

Doctor: Why did you do that?

Wolf: They reminded me of some kids back home. Always playing and having fun. They got everything I didn't get.

Doctor: What was that?

Wolf: Houses. Nice places to live. And they even got to pick what their houses were made of. One wanted wood, one straw, one brick. Whatever they wanted they got. I never got anything like that.

Doctor: So you're mad about that?

Wolf: Yeah. I never got nothin. Growing up my mama said I didn't need nothin. My mama was mean. I guess that's why I don't like people wearing red. She was always running around the house in that damn red dress. I didn't like it.

Doctor: Is that why you were mean to the little girl in red? Red Riding Hood? Did she remind you of

someone who was mean to you?

Wolf: She always hurt me.

Doctor: Who did?

Wolf: My mother. She was mean.

Doctor: In what way?

Wolf: Any way she could. She'd scream at me. Holler at me. Sometimes she'd hit me. She was mean. And about wolves. You know we travel in packs. Sometimes it's happy, but a lot of time it ain't happy. Sometimes things ain't so good. My dad died when I was just a pup. Left mom with all us kids. She wasn't no good at it. She didn't like it. She'd get mad and hit us.

Doctor: You didn't like that?

Wolf: No.

Doctor: Well others don't like it when you're mean to them and hurt them.

Wolf: I know but I can't help it sometimes.

Doctor: Well, I think I can help you to stop hurting others.

Wolf: How?

Doctor: Come back tomorrow morning and we'll start working on the problem. All right? Can you stay out of trouble til then?

Wolf: I think so. I'll see you tomorrow morning.

Wolf exits.

Gretel's Miserable Adventure

by The 1994 GED Class at Project Place

Characters

Gretel *(of Hansel and Gretel fame)*

Dr. Marianne Martin

Scene

Dr. Martin's Office. 3:00 in the afternoon

Dr. M (Dr. Martin): Hello I'm Dr. Marianne Martin.

Gretel: My name is Gretel.

Dr. M: Please come in Gretel. Sit down.

Gretel: Thank you.

Dr. M: How old are you, Gretel?

Gretel: I'm ten.

Dr. M: Now Gretel, how can I help you? Can you tell me about your problem?

Gretel: My mother and father abandoned me.

Dr. M: Hmmm. Do you have any idea why they might have done that?

Gretel: No.

Dr. M: Do you think they had a reason?

Gretel: No.

Dr. M: Were you a good little girl?

Gretel: Yes.

Dr. M: Did you always mind?

Gretel: Not all the time.

Dr. M: That's being honest. Most children can't mind all the time, but did you mind most of the time?

Gretel: Yes.

Dr. M: Did your parents ever drink?

Gretel: My father drank all the time.

Dr. M: All the time. It's very hard for a child to live in a home where the parents drink a lot. Drinking's a very bad disease. Did you know it was a disease?

Gretel: No.

Dr. M: Let's talk about you. Where did they abandon you?

Gretel: In the woods far from my house.

Dr. M: In the cold woods with no one around?

Gretel: Yes.

Dr. M: Did you have food with you?

Gretel: No.

Dr. M: You must have been hungry. It's very scary to be out in the woods

and be hungry isn't it? Were you very frightened?

Gretel: Yes. I was very scared. I didn't know what to do. I cried a lot.

Dr. M: I think I would cry too. Do you think you can forgive your parents for doing that?

Gretel: No.

Dr M: That's an honest answer. I'm not sure I could forgive my parents for doing that. How do you feel about what happened? Did it change you?

Gretel: How do I feel about that? Sad. Very sad. I don't think anyone should do that to their children.

Dr. M: You're right. I don't think they should either.

Gretel: They were wrong.

Dr. M: Are you angry?

Gretel: Yes, very angry!

Dr. M: What would you do to them if you could do something to them to make them understand how you felt? What would you do to them to make them understand?

Gretel: Probably punish them.

Dr. M: How would you punish them? If they had to do anything you told them to do, what would you have them do?

Gretel: Get on their knees and scrub the floors.

Dr. M: Hard work, huh?

Gretel: Yes.

Dr. M: You think that's a good punishment?

Gretel: Yes.

Dr. M: Would you make them go without their dinner?

Gretel: Yes.

Dr. M: Yes. That might make them know how you felt. When you have children how do you think you are going to handle them?

Gretel: Not the way they handled me!

Dr. M: Ah, that's good. You're not going to be mean?

Gretel: No my children will be well taken care of.

Dr. M: What are you gonna do if your child disobeys you and doesn't do what you want him to do?

Gretel: Talk to him, not yell at him.

Dr. M: Did your mom yell at you?

Gretel: She yelled at me all the time.

Dr. M: That hurts too doesn't it, when people yell at you.

Gretel: Yes it does. It hurts a lot.

Dr. M: Was your brother with you when they left you?

Gretel: Yes, my one brother, Hansel, was with me.

Dr. M: So they were they mean to him too?

Gretel: Nope. It was just me. They were always meaner to me. They were always better to Hansel.

Dr. M: It's kind of hard when you're the one who's getting picked on, isn't it?

Gretel: Yeah.

Dr. M: It's not right. Do you think you've learned anything from this experience?

Gretel: Yeah. I did learn a lot.

Dr. M: What did you learn that you can tell me about?

Gretel: About taking care of my own kids. I learned not to ever let my kids go hungry. I learned never to raise my hand to my kids, or leave them alone in the woods. If I have a problem with my kids, I'll sit down and talk to my kids like a mother, like a mother should.

Dr. M: Yes that's good. I think you learned more than your mother did. Don't you? Did your mother drink any?

Gretel: I don't know if my mother drank but my father did every day and night. Constantly.

Dr. M: Did he ever try to stop your mother from putting you kids out in the woods?

Gretel: Yeah he tried but my mom didn't listen.

Dr. M: Did she say why she was doing it?

Gretel: No.

Dr. M: She just couldn't have you around any more?

Gretel: I guess not.

Dr. M: How about if we find a nice foster home for you?

Gretel: That would be all right, I guess.

Dr. M: Would you like a nice family in the city or in the country?

Gretel: I'd like to be in the country, because it would be quiet and peaceful.

Dr. M: Are you afraid it would remind you of the woods?

Gretel: No. I wouldn't be afraid if I were living with a loving family.

Dr. M: Well, we'll close this session now, Gretel, and I'll work on finding you a good family.

Gretel: Thank you very much Doctor.

Gretel exits.

The Old Woman Who Lived in the Shoe with Too Many Children

by The 1994 GED Class at Project Place

Characters

The Old Woman, Olive

Planned Parenthood Counselor, Betty Boop

Scene

An Office

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe she had so many children she didn't know what to do so she went to see a counselor at Planned Parenthood.....

Betty: Hello, I'm Betty Boop, the counselor here at Planned Parenthood.

Olive: I'm the Old Woman who Lives in the Shoe. My name is Olive.

Betty: Well how are you today, Olive?

Olive: I'm depressed. I'm upset and I'm aggravated.

Betty: Would you like to talk about what's making you feel so terrible?

Olive: Well, I just had my twenty-seventh child. I have four sets of twins, one set of triplets...

Betty: Oh my! We certainly have services here that would help you. Twenty-seven children.....oh my.....you do need some help. How did you happen to have so many children? Were they planned?

Olive: No. They just kept coming and coming....

Betty: You know Olive, there are lots of ways to prevent pregnancy these days. You know you have options, Olive.

Olive: Options?! I wish you had told me that years ago. I'd be in good shape today. What kind of options are you talking about? I'm married to a dominating man who thinks he has to run everything. A man who doesn't work. He just sits around all day and gives orders. And he wants us to have lots of children. He says it's a woman's job to have babies.

Betty: Oh Olive, that's a very old-fashioned idea. You can do lots of things to prevent pregnancies.

Olive: Oh really? Like what?

Betty: Like the pill for one thing.

Olive: Oh, I can't take that. Someone told me that if you took the pill you grow hair on your chest.

Betty: Oh my goodness. That's not true. No, that certainly isn't true.

Olive: Boy I've been told lots of lies. And I have no time to read about these things. All I do is take care of the kids, and the house. I do fifty- seven loads of wash a week.

Betty: I can imagine you are very busy taking care of twenty seven children by yourself.

Olive: I'm under a lot of pressure.

Betty: And you are not dealing with the stress of taking care of these children very well?

Olive: No I feel like I'm about to fall apart.

Betty: I can see that tension in your face.

Olive: My husband doesn't help at all, so I have lots to do all the time. He says women are the dust of the earth - something to walk on. My hair is getting white, my hands are shaking, see.

Betty: Do you ever do anything for yourself?

Olive: I don't have time.

Betty: If you had some time what would you do for yourself?

Olive: I'd get my G.E.D. so that I could get a decent job to support my family. I had to quit school when I was in fifth grade to help my own mom around the house and my dream is to go back. I like to read but I don't have any time. I don't have any time to do anything but take care of kids.

Betty: Olive, you're a good mother - but you have an unreasonable amount of work to do. Now if I could get you help taking care of your children, you could start your G.E.D. class and maybe take some computer classes. There are lots of good jobs in that area. What do you think?

Olive: Well, I may be too old to start something like that, but I think I'd like to try.

Betty: Tell you what, I'll make some calls and set you up in that class. But in the meantime it's time to stop having babies so that you can do something for yourself and get some control in your life.

Olive: That's for sure.

Betty: I'm going to take you down the hall to get some more information on birth control. All right?

Olive: That sounds good. Thank you, Betty. I appreciate your help. Let's go!

The Morning After

by The 1994 GED Class at Project Place

Characters

Gramma Alice

Officer Nellie

Scene

Hospital Room where Gramma lies all bumped and bruised.

Officer: Hello. I'm officer Nellie Rowe. Are you Red Riding Hood's grandmother, Gramma Alice? I was sent here to make a report on your accident.

Gramma: Yes I'm Gramma Alice. And it was no accident! It was a brutal attack. He was brutal. It was no accident!

Officer: Just tell me what happened.

Gramma: Well I heard a knock at the door and when I opened it he just charged in!

Officer: Who charged in?

Gramma: The Wolf.

Officer: What time was this?

Gramma: In the afternoon, about 4 o'clock. He charged in and started beating me around. Slamming me here and there. I hit the coffee table and broke my leg. People shouldn't do that to old people. *(sob)*

Officer: Can you tell me what he looked like, what he had on? Do you know his name?

Gramma: He's the Wolf.

Officer: Did he rob you?

Gramma: He didn't rob me I think because the Woodsman came out of the woods and chased him off, but it was too late then. I'd already been beat up. *(sob)* He beat me up.

Officer: What were you doing in the woods alone?

Gramma: Well I got a little house out there. My family got tired of me - they didn't want me around any more. I wanted to get away so I wouldn't be a burden to anyone.

Officer: I see you're all bandaged up, leg broken.

Gramma: He was mean. He didn't care.

Officer: Can you tell me what he had on?

Gramma: He had on a pair of jeans and a plaid shirt *(sniff)* and, ah, I'm sure you can find him. That Woodsman was chasing him. He mighta' caught him.

Officer. What about his height and weight?

Gramma: Oh, about seven foot tall. He was a big fella and maybe 250 lbs.

Officer: What color was his fur?

Gramma: It was cream color. Like the color of coffee with milk in it.

Officer: Can you tell me exactly what happened? Did he push you?

Gramma: Yes. He pushed me right over the end table. That's how I hurt my head.

Officer: How did he break your leg?

Gramma: After I fell over the end table he just picked me up under my arms and throwed me up against the wall. And when he threw me up against the wall my legs went under me.

Officer: Did anyone else see this?

Gramma: No. Nobody was there. Nobody there. I was all alone. My granddaughter came in shortly afterwards.

Officer: What's her name?

Gramma: Red. That's what everyone calls her because of the bright red cape she wears all the time. She's got a thing about that hood.

Officer: What did she do when she came in?

Gramma: She started screaming and called 911 and then the police came. The woodsman came before and took off after the wolf. I don't know who exactly called him. I was out of it by then -

Officer: So you were knocked out?

Gramma: Yes. I got all dizzy. Then I woke up in the hospital this morning.

Officer: We're gonna see if we can catch this Wolf.

Gramma: Oh I hope you do.

Officer: If we catch him will you identify him and take him to court?

Gramma: Absolutely - as long as you protect me. I'm scared you know.

Officer: Where will you go when you get out of the hospital? We'll need to contact you about your court date.

Gramma: I guess I'll go back home to the woods. I mean my family came to see me. My son kinda wanted to take me home with him but I know his wife don't want me there. So I'll be at my little place in the woods.

Officer: Do you feel safe at your house now?

Gramma: Not really. I know there are many more wolves out there that are mean and want to hurt somebody.

Officer: Do you have a daughter you can visit or a friend?

Gramma: I got a couple of friends I could stay with but I just don't wanna be a burden on nobody.

Officer: Don't you think you better go stay with one of them?

Gramma: Maybe for few days, but nine chances out of ten you can get in touch with me at home. My granddaughter did say she might come stay with me for a while because she's scared to death to leave me alone again.

Officer: I'd be scared too after something like that happened to me.

Gramma: It's very scary, but there are a lot of people like me out there on their own - and have nobody. We've had children and raised children and been good to them, but they got their own lives and they're too busy for us. They talked about getting me into a retirement home but I don't want to go into one of those places. They make you feel like they're runnin everything. You can't even turn around without asking their permission to go to the bathroom. I may be retired but I'm not retarded.

Officer: You need someone to stay with you.

Gramma: I do need a little support, but I don't need to be in a place where they're telling me how to live. I mean I did take and raise my children and I do have enough sense to take care of myself. It's just not right to push people aside when they git my age. We've got a lot to give yet if people would let us start givin' it. A few doors need to be opened. Discrimination against the elderly, that's exactly what it is.

Officer: Yes ma'am, we'll see what we can do. I understand what you're going through.

Gramma: You don't now, but you will.

To Find a Prince

by The 1994 GED Class at Project Place

Characters

Cindy (Cinderella)

Goldie (Goldilocks)

Linda (Cinderella's friend)

Goldie: Hi Cindy. Who's your friend?

Cindy: Linda.

Goldie: Hi Linda. I'm Goldie, at least that's what they call me cuz of my beautiful golden hair. So whatcha been doing lately?

Cindy: Nothin much.

Goldie: Meet any nice interesting princes lately?

Cindy: No. I have too much to do. I have to wash the floors and cook and clean.

Goldie: What a drag!

Cindy: I have to do my chores or I'll get punished.

Linda: Sounds like you do everybody's chores.

Cindy: I know I do. No time to go anywhere or have any fun.

Goldie: So I guess your stepmother isn't being any nicer to you.

Cindy: Oh no. My stepmother's so mean, wicked really.

Goldie: Too bad your dad had to die; he was a nice guy.

Cindy: Yeah he was, wasn't he. I really miss him.

Goldie: Yeah.

Linda: You sound like you're the slave around the house.

Cindy: I am.

Linda: What do you do?

Cindy: Everyday I have to wash the floors, cook and do the dishes, make the beds and do the ironing.

Linda: How about your other sisters? What do they do?

Cindy: They do nothing!

Linda: They just watch while you do all the work?

Cindy: Yup. They just watch me work and they go out and have fun.

Linda: Do you ever go out?

Cindy: No time to go out.

Goldie: And how come you're always running around in those raggedy clothes?

Cindy: My mother won't let me buy new clothes.

Goldie: But your sisters always have new clothes; they have great clothes.

Cindy: Yeah I know that.

Linda: Look at those old shoes you got on.

Cindy: Yeah tell me about it! Someday, I'd like to buy me a pair of gorgeous high heel shoes, a nice dress, and get my hair all fixed up.

Goldie: Know why they don't want you to dress up?

Cindy: Why?

Goldie: You'd be prettier then them and they'd be jealous.

Linda: I don't like people like that. Hey, I heard they were having a ball Saturday night. Let's go.

Cindy: I don't think my mother will let me. I have to stay home and do my chores. Are you gonna go?

Linda: When you finish your chores will she let you? We could loan you some clothes.

Cindy: Maybe I'll sneak out.

Linda: How about you Goldie, are you going?

Goldie: I love balls, but I'm not really the ball type.

Linda: All the handsome guys are gonna be there. They say the prince is gonna be at this one too.

Cindy: Really?

Goldie: Wouldn't that be something if you walked in all beautiful and lost your golden slipper and the prince found it?

Cindy: Yeah! Let's go Goldie. We'd have such fun.

Goldie: I'm not sure I belong there. You know me, I'm not the greatest person in the world. I'm always going to different houses to try and make a few bucks - a little bed hopping here and there. People talk.

Linda: Bed hopping, what is that?

Goldie: Oh now and then I sneak into a house and raid the refrigerator when no one's around. And sometimes I try out the beds.

Linda: Have you bumped into the Bears yet?

Goldie: Naw. No one's caught me yet, but I'm not afraid of getting caught. Maybe if things were better at home I'd care a little more. Maybe if I had a good relationship with my mom or dad, but my family doesn't really care what I do.

Linda: Aren't you afraid you might jump into the wrong bed and not be able to get out. You might get killed or eaten up.

Goldie: That's sounds interesting!

Linda: Something to think about girl. This isn't a joke.

Goldie: My family sure wouldn't miss me.

Cindy: We would though.

Goldie: You would?

Linda: Yes we would. So come to the ball with us, Goldie.

Goldie: I probably won't. I don't let lovely things like that happen to me.

Linda: Maybe all three of us should get decked out and go out and enjoy ourselves. We'll put on our best dresses with slits up to here and dance all night.

Cindy: That sounds like fun. Goldie, should we go?

Goldie: Yeah, maybe I'll meet a good- looking man.

Cindy: Maybe I'll meet the prince!

Goldie: You might. You know, you have high expectations, so you'll probably meet a nice man that treats you with respect. I know I'm not one for respecting me but someday I'd like to meet a nice one that treats me good.

Linda: And if you go to this ball, you just might.

Goldie: Yeah. That's what we gotta do.

Cindy: We gotta go to the ball. Yeah. I'll meet the prince, then I'll drop my shoe and leave it behind for the prince. Then he'll come and find me, and we'll live happily ever after.

Linda: Cindy, I hope you'll drop your shoe, but if you forget I'll leave mine!

Dumbo's Different

by The 1994 GED Class at Project Place

Characters

Dumbo

Dumbo's Mom

Scene

Dumbo's kitchen. Dumbo's mom is sitting reading.

Dumbo comes stomping in and slams the door.

Dumbo: Man, Mom, I'm mad!

Mom: What are you mad about, son?

Dumbo: Every time I go to school, the other kids laugh and laugh and laugh at me.

Mom: You can't pay any attention to those mean kids, honey.

Dumbo: Well I have to go to school with them, and it's hard to do my work and all when they're looking at my ears and making fun of me.

Mom: You have beautiful ears darling.

Dumbo: Mom! My ears aren't beautiful and they're always in the way. When I go to the bathroom and lunch and recess I sometimes trip over my ears and people laugh. Nothing feels right.

Mom: Darling, as you grow up you will grow into your ears. They'll seem smaller. You'll see. You have to be patient.

Dumbo: You know what they call me?

Mom: What do they call you?

Dumbo: Horrible things! Things that hurt my feelings.

Mom: Aww now honey.

Dumbo: Mom, what would you say if I asked you for plastic surgery?

Mom: Plastic surgery?! Honey, those doctors could never improve on such a good thing.

Dumbo: They're obviously not good if they keep getting me in trouble.

Mom: Oh babe, I think you're just looking for an easy way out.

Dumbo: No mamma, you can go to school with me; you'll see what it's like. Even my teacher laughs at me.

Mom: Mrs. Young laughs at you?!

Dumbo: And the principal too.

Mom: What?!

Dumbo: The principal called me into his office just to look at my ears.

Mom: Son, you're sure it was not because you did something wrong?

Dumbo: I'm positive I didn't do anything wrong. He stared at me, then just laughed and laughed.

Mom: Well I'm going to have a talk with them. Teachers and principals have no business behaving in such a way.

Dumbo: Okay Mommy, but it won't do any good.

Mom: And as far as the other kids are concerned you take one of your ears and slap them upside the head a few times and they'll stop making fun of you. You might get into trouble but I'll take up your case.

Dumbo: Mom, I never was violent before. I don't know about that. You told me not to fight.

Mom: I know you're right, that wouldn't solve the problem. I lost my head for a moment.

Dumbo: I just wish I wasn't born with such big ears.

Mom: Let's go to school now and talk to the people at school. I'll tell them they have no business picking on you like that.

Dumbo: They'll just deny it Mommy. People won't believe me because I'm just a little kid.

Mom: I know, dear. You're just a little different, but different is good.

Dumbo: Different is not good!

Mom: Yes it is.

Dumbo: No it isn't.

Mom: Oh yes it is.

Dumbo: How is it good? No! Different is not good. A while back, my friend Billy was made fun of for his big, funny fingers. Finally one day he couldn't take it any more. He went home and shot himself with his dad's gun. Sometimes I think I want to kill myself.

Mom: Sweetie, I'm not going to let you do that! I won't let you hurt yourself!

Dumbo: I can do it when you're not around. You can't stop me.

Mom: Please don't think about doing anything so silly.

Dumbo: Mom, what's for dinner?

Mom: Don't try to change the subject. Goodness gracious child, you're not gonna do anything to yourself are you? We'll figure this out; we'll make things better.

Dumbo: Okay.

Mom: Do you understand that some things different are good?

Dumbo: No Mommy.

Mom: You will. Someday those others will want your ears. I mean, how many of those others can fly?

Dumbo: I hate flying. Everyone wants a lift. I know that's the only reason they're nice to me.

Mom: Oh dear, dear. Darling we'll try and work these things out. Are you hungry now? We're having your favorite for dinner.

Dumbo: Chitlins?

Mom: Chitlins? Now who ever heard of an elephant eating chitlins? We're having peanuts.

Dumbo: I don't want peanuts. I'm tired of peanuts.

Mom: Even chocolate-covered peanuts?

Dumbo: I want chitlins.

Mom: Oh all right, but I never heard of an elephant eating chitlins. You must have a little African elephant in you.

Dumbo: You said I came from good ancestry.

Mom: Well that's true. You did.

Dumbo: Can we eat now?

Mom: Yes, darling.

Dumbo: I'll wash up. Please could I have my chitlins nice and hot and I wouldn't mind some peanuts with the them.

Mom: Okay, dear.

Dumbo: Mommy, I love you.

Mom: I love you too, sweetheart.

Jack Faces the Giant

by The 1994 GED Class at Project Place

Characters

The Giant

Jack

Scene

A hospital room

Time: The morning after Jack cut down the beanstalk and the Giant fell to earth.

The Giant is in the hospital bed. Jack enters the room with a police officer.

Giant: FEE FI FO FUM !!! I smell that boy again. What are you doing here?

Jack: Ask them. Wasn't my idea.

Officer: Is this the person who broke into your home?

Giant: Yes officer, he's the one. He climbed up onto my own little private land, broke into my house and stole my Golden Goose. He also tried to steal my Singing Harp.

Jack: You were holding them hostage.

Giant: I wasn't holding anyone hostage. Those were gifts.

Jack: That's not what the Singing Harp said.

Giant: It doesn't matter what she said. Possession is nine tenths of the law, and she was in my possession until you came to steal her. I was only protecting my property from a little thief.

Jack: I'm not a real thief. I only stole because my mother was starving.

Giant: Humph!! If that's the truth, why didn't you come to me? I could have offered you a job. Is that what your family teaches you? That it's better to steal and take what you want or need rather than do honest, hard work?

Jack: You came in yelling FEE FI FO FUM I smell the blood of an Englishman. Then you yelled about grinding my bones to make your bread. You think I'm gonna come up to you and ask you for a job? I was too scared. You threatened my life.

Giant: Well, if you had come to the front door and knocked nicely I wouldn't have been so mean. It's true Giants have a taste for Englishmen, but I never eat any of my hired help and I pay my help well if they work hard. They earn a golden egg every day.

Jack: I thought all you wanted was to be mean.

Giant: You know the only reason I'm mean like this is because I've been living by myself for the past fifteen years - there's a serious shortage of giant women. Don't you think you'd be grumpy too if you were so lonely?

Jack: I reckon I would. But face it you're scary. Anyway you cut it, you're scary.

Giant: Didn't anyone tell you that old story about Beauty and the Beast? It's what's inside a person that counts.

Jack: The Beast wasn't three stories tall!

Giant: Is it my fault I was born a giant? Talk to my parents about that one. Maybe you should be more tolerant.

Jack: I'll try.

Giant: Well Jack, what are we going to do about this. You stole my golden egg. Took my harp. As I'm climbing down the beanstalk, just to talk to you about taking back what belongs to me, you chop the beanstalk down. I fell and shattered my spine in three places. I got two fractures in each leg and my doctor says my right arm will never work right again. I can only see out of one eye. I can smell real good though. Now what are we going to do about this? I was seriously contemplating suing you for malicious destruction and taking every penny you and your mother have.

Jack: I'm poor. I've got nothing. The police said they'd take me to jail, then I couldn't help you or my mom. She's hungry. She took that goose to try and pay off some of the bills. Our mortgage is due. They're gonna take our house.

Giant: See the goose is not going to lay eggs for you unless you know the secret code, the secret word, and I'm telling you nothing. But maybe we could come to some kind of understanding on this.

Jack: Maybe if you weren't quite so mean and sharp I could work for you, especially since you can't get around yourself.

Giant: Okay, here's the deal. Seeing that you hurt me so bad I'm gonna be laid up for a least a year, you have to work for me for that whole year. Because you're in such distress I'll give you two golden eggs instead of one, and at the end of the year I'll let you go home. Does that seem fair to you?

Jack: Yes, sir.

Giant: So is it a deal?

Jack: I have a question.

Giant: What's that?

Jack: When you're up and around again, you gonna watch where you're walking?

SHORT PLAYS

Walter Williams and Eddie Wilson in "Out of Darkness" (Coolidge Corner Branch Library).

walter Williams, Eddie Wilson and Theresa Williams in "Interview with an Alien" (Coolidge Corner Branch Library). Paul Katz, photographer.

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54.

Tina White, playwright of "Reflections of Oneself". Roger Gordy, photographer.

Tina White and Walter Williams in "Reflections of Oneself" (Coolidge Corner Branch Library). Paul Katz, photographer.

The Decision

by Stephanie Johnson

Characters

Jenna

Karyn

Guard #1

Cook

Scene

A mental asylum. Anytown, U.S.A.

Time

Any time

(Karyn lay in darkness, her head propped up against the cold white wall. Her head itched but the straight jacket prevented her from scratching. Her hair lay in a tumbling disarray of curls, framing her face, but the uninformed looker might believe she looked vulnerable and strangely beautiful.)

Guard: Okay girlie, get up. You've had enough of the hole - maybe. Let's see how you behave now.

Karyn: (Says nothing at first, because she's concentrating on adjusting her eyes to the sudden light.) How long have I been in here?

Guard: Long enough, now let's get going! I don't have all day to be waiting on you.

Karyn: I'm hungry. Can I eat?

Guard: You're just in time for mess cafe.

Karyn: (Struggling to stand up in spite of the constraining straight jacket.) I'm so hungry I'm sure even the slop they probably serve in here will taste good.

(Taking off the straightjacket, the guard leads Karyn to the cafeteria.)

Guard: Grab a tray and get in line. After lunch is over, the warden will send for you.

Karyn: Whatever.

(As soon as Karyn had been brought to the asylum she'd started acting out. She'd yelled and screamed and fought until the guards had been forced to inject her with some type of tranquillizer and put the straightjacket on her. Why, she

wondered, hadn't she been put in one of those padded rooms she'd seen on television. Her thoughts were interrupted by a splash of hot mashed potatoes on her arm.)

Cook: You're all set girl. What more do you want? This ain't no "all you can eat buffet."

Karyn: I can see that *(Turning around with her tray, Karyn notices a girl sitting all alone. She makes her way to the girl and the table she sits at)* Hi. I'm Karyn. Who are you?

Jenna: My name is Jenna Anderson. I've been here for thirteen years. Please don't ask me to make any decisions.

Karyn: (Laughing) What are you talking about? Why do you sound as if you rehearsed that little monologue?

Jenna: I don't know.

Karyn: Okay. So how old are you?

Jenna: I'm twenty five. (She looks down at her plate)

Karyn: Well? (Pauses) Aren't you going to ask me how old I am?

Jenna: I - I don't know.

Karyn: What's not to know? Either you are or you're not. What's the problem? (Jenna says nothing) Well just for the record I'm twenty three *(Looking around at the people as if seeing them for the first time, Karyn notices odd things she hadn't before. A woman talking to her fork; a man pulling out his hair, strand by strand it seems)*

Jenny: (Shrugs) I don't know.

Karyn: (Beginning to get annoyed) Hey, if you don't want me to sit near you just say so. You don't have to sit there like some idiot, saying, "You don't know, you don't know" You look normal enough. What's your problem anyway?

Jenna: (Looking sad) They say I have a problem making decisions. It's why I can't form opinions. I can't decide what I like and don't like. I don't decide what to wear, what to read, what to watch on T.V. what to say to people, who I do or don't like. *(Giving Karyn a lopsided smile)* Some days I don't even decide whether or not to get out of bed. Peggy helps me though. She decides for me.

Karyn: How odd! What do you do when Peggy's not there?

Jenna: I wait for someone else to tell me to get up.

Karyn: Who's Peggy?

Jenny: My best friend in the whole world.

Karyn: Who decided that?

Jenna: She did.

Karyn: Oh, well since you probably can't decide whether or not to ask, I'll tell you why I'm in here. You see, I met this guy, Sonny. Real sweet and gorgeous, right? So anyway. He said he had a way for us to make a few bucks on the side - what with me being outta work and living with him and his mom. So anyway, he takes me to this lady named Ruby. Before I know it, he's gone and Ruby's tellin' me about my first customer. "No way" I says, "I ain't no hooker." I left her house, or should I say brothel. Anyway when I get back to Sonny's house and tell him no way, I ain't doing it, he starts getting all upset and hitting me. I got his gun and shot him in the leg. But I was so mad I wanted him dead, so I shot him in the head. I really didn't have a choice, bein' so mad and all.

Jenna: You killed him? Why?

Karyn: (A little uneasy) I told you, I was real mad. I didn't have a choice.

Jenna: Oh *(She looks uncertain for a moment, but then her face is blank.)*

Karyn: What do you think?

Jenna: I don't.

Karyn: Oh yeah, I forgot. "You don't know."

(The bell rings to end lunch.)

Act II

Scene: The recreational room at the asylum. People wandering around aimlessly. Some talking to themselves. Others staring at inanimate objects, almost as if they are willing them to move. One woman holds a very animated conversation with an invisible friend. Karyn and Jenna sit with a deck of cards at a round breakfast table.

Karyn: So who's this Peggy person?

Jenna: My best friend, in the whole world.

Karyn: Well where is she? How come I ain't never seen her?

Jenna: I don't know. Maybe she'll meet you one day. Maybe she won't.

Karyn: Whatever.

Jenna: So how long are you in for?

Karyn: My lawyer says that since she managed to prove I was insane, I won't have to go to prison. I'm gonna have to prove that I'm not. So I don't know, as long as it takes.

Jenna: Oh.

Karyn: How 'bout you?

Jenna: I don't know. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe never. It depends on when I can make a decision. They say I can't live in the real world without making decisions. Why are you in here, again?

Karyn: I told you. Did you forget already since last month?

Jenna: Yeah.

Karyn: I killed him. He made me so mad. I couldn't help it. I had to.

Jenna: *(With a twinkle in her eye.)* Oh.

Karyn: Ain't you sick of this place? Thirteen years, that's a long time. *(When Jenna didn't answer, Karyn wasn't surprised because she knew what Jenna's reply would be if she did answer.)*

Act III

Scene: *Karyn looking all over the place. She hadn't seen Jenna all day long and that was unusual. They'd become good friends in the last six months and Karyn was worried.*

Karyn: *(Shouting)* Where the hell is she?!

Guard: Gone. That little girl is finally gone.

Karyn: What do you mean gone? Gone where? With who?

Guard: *(Smirking)* She couldn't take it any more. She hung herself with the sash from her robe.

Karyn: Hanged herself? but I don't get it. Why?

Guard: I don't know. Maybe you can get some answers from this. *(The guard plucked an envelope from her apron pocket. It was still sealed and it had Karyn's name on it.)*

Karyn: *(Wandering back to the rec room. Following her instincts as she couldn't see through the tears that threatened to spill any second.)*

Oh GOD! *(She sits on the tattered couch and opens the letter and reads.)*

Dear Karyn,

How are you? By the time you read this I'll probably be gone. You see, I've made a decision! Can you believe it? Well not on my own entirely, with Peggy, she's with me now, inside my heart and my head. Anyway, Peggy and I have decided (don't you love that word? I do!) that we don't want to live in a world where we have to make decisions all the time. So we made one big decision, the only one. We would have lived but we chose not to. Cool huh? Anyhow, maybe we'll see your friend Sonny on the other side. He'll be different though because we chose to die. I don't think he did. But then again you didn't choose for him to die either, did you. No, you had more important things to decide about. Like, what to like, what not to, what to wear, what to read, what to watch on T.V. who to like or not, or just plain deciding whether or not to get out of bed everyday. Anyway, maybe we'll meet again one day. I'm too tired of making decisions to know if we will or won't.

Love,

Jenna P. Anderson

(Karyn, sat for a long time with tears rolling down her face. She thought of poor Jenna who'd chosen her own fate. And she thought back to the night she killed Sonny. She remembered the opportunity she had to leave after she shot Sonny in the leg. She lay the phone on the nightstand where Sonny lay bleeding from the wound in his leg. She saw herself pulling the trigger a second time. The smile on her own lips at the sight of his lifeless form. And she cried harder because she'd wasted a chance in life by taking someone else's, and now she would have to live with that for the rest of her life - because now she didn't have a choice.)

Reflections of One's Self

by Tina White

Characters

Mabel Johnson

Charley Moon (Mr. Charley)

Scene

One morning, Mabel decided to look in the newspaper for a part-time job doing very light housekeeping. She came across a want ad "Seeking elderly woman to clean and cook, wash laundry and iron and every now and then walk to the store for milk and bread. Mr. Charley Moon"

Mabel decided to go and meet Mr. Charley about this job.

Mabel slowly walked up the stairs and knocked on Mr. Charley's door. She stood there very nervously. She heard this mean voice.

Mr. C: Who is it? I said who is it?

Mabel: Hello Sir. My name is Mabel Johnson. I am here about the ad. The housekeeping ad that is in the newspaper.

Mr. C: What ad?

Mabel: The ad that said you are looking for a housekeeper.

Mr. C: Oh! Can you hold on a minute.

Mabel: Yes Sir.

(Mr. Charley opens the door very slowly. He stares so hard at Mabel, looking her up and down. He doesn't even greet her with a hello, not even a smile).

Mr. C: Come in!

(Mabel slowly walks into the house.)

Mabel: Oh, Mr. Charley, you have a beautiful home.

Mr. C: Yes I know. So you are here for the job. Tell me a little bit about yourself and where you are from.

Mabel: I am from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I've been a housekeeper for twelve years.

Mr. C: Do you have children?

Mabel: No, Mr. Charley, I don't have any children at all. I live alone.

Mr. C: Good, because I don't like children. I don't like anyone.

(Mabel just looks at Mr. Charley. She knows that he has a serious attitude problem.)

Mr. C: Alright you got the job, but before you start to work, you need to know my rules.

Mabel: Yes Sir, Mr. Charley.

Mr. C: I want you to be on time. I want a hot cup of coffee every morning at 7:30. My breakfast at 7:40, lunch at 12:00, my dinner at 4 p.m. Do you understand?

Mabel: Alright, Mr. Charley.

(Mabel starts off to the kitchen.)

Mr. C: Stop! I am not finished. Clean the floors. I need my clothes washed and ironed.

Mabel: Yes, Sir, Mr. Charley.

Mr. C: Mabel every now and then I'll need you to go to the store to get milk and bread.

Mabel: Yes Sir, Mr. Charley *(with a quiet tone in her voice.)*

Mr. C: Mabel, as long as you do your job we will get along great.

(Mabel just looks at Mr. Charley and shakes her head. Mabel wants the job, but she knows that Mr. Charley has a bad attitude problem, or he just doesn't like colored folks. Next day, Mabel arrives at work on time and knocks at the door. Mr. Charley comes to the door.)

Mr C: Come in.

Mabel: Good morning, Mr. Charley. Did you rest well?

Mr. C: No I did not. And why did you ask. Just go and get me a hot cup of coffee.

(Mabel goes into the kitchen to make Mr. C a cup of coffee. Mr. C sits there staring at Mabel while she was in the kitchen making his coffee.)

Mabel: Sir, is there anything wrong?

Mr C: No! Just bring me a cup of coffee now, and I would like my breakfast!

Mabel: Yes Sir. And what would you like for breakfast?

Mr. C: A bowl of cream of wheat, glass of orange juice and some prunes.

Mabel: Alright Mr. Charley your breakfast is ready, come and get it.

Mr. C: No! You can bring it to me.

Mabel: Yes, Mr. Charley.

(Mabel cleans the house, washes his clothes and irons them, fixes his lunch and dinner.

Mabel: Goodnight, Mr. Charley. I am leaving now.

Mr. C: Use the back door!

Mabel: Excuse me? *(Mabel is very upset with Mr. Charley.)*

Mr. C: You heard me. I said use the back door.

Mabel: Now you just wait here. I did not arrive at the back door this morning. I came through the front door, and I will leave through the front door. I am trying to give you respect, and I would like respect from you. I came through the front door, and I will leave through the front door.

Mr. C: Respect! Respect! You will never get respect from me.

Mabel: Mr. Charley, stop treating me like I am trash.

Mr. C: You are trash. All you colored folks are trash, and this is why I want you to use the back door. Do not use the front door anymore. The back door will always be open when you arrive.

Mabel: Let me tell you one damn thing, who the hell you think that you are talking to? I will not use the back door! I will not be treated as a slave! I will not let you or anyone else treat me like trash! I am an elderly, black woman who wants respect, and who will give respect to others. When I first started working for you, you had this attitude problem. You think that you can talk to me any kind of way. You are so ungrateful. This is why you don't have anyone here to take care of you. Because of your attitude, you will always be alone, and you will die alone. Look at yourself Mr. Charley, you don't have a friend. Children are afraid of you. Your neighbors cross to the other side of the street before they reach your house.

Mr. C: Get the hell out of my house before I throw you out!

Mabel: I am not going anywhere until I am finished telling you what is on my mind. You are so ungrateful, unthankful, ignorant and hateful and a stubborn old man.

Mr. C: What did you say?

Mabel: I said that you are a stubborn, old man. I don't need to listen to you trying to put me down because it's not working. And I don't need this job. Maybe you should find yourself another housekeeper.

Mr. C: You can't talk to me like that!

Mabel: Well I did! Mr. Charley I am not afraid of you or anyone else. The only person that I fear is God. I am just here to help you. *(Mr. Charley stands there looking at Mabel. He just can not believe it. For once someone has stood up to him. Mr. Charley feels so ashamed he can not look at Mabel.)*

Mabel: I am going, Mr. Charley. I will leave through the front door.

(Mr. Charley watches Mabel walk slowly, toward the front door and open it. He doesn't want to lose Mabel as his housekeeper.)

Mr. C: Stop! Don't leave.

(Mabel is so shocked when she hears Mr. Charley say, "Don't Leave." Mabel slowly closes the front door.)

Mr. C: Mabel come and sit down. I need to talk to you about myself. I have been alone for eight years. My wives left me because they were afraid of me. My children don't even come by to see me. Everybody thinks that I am losing my mind. People are afraid of me. Children cross to the other side of the street before they reach my house.

Mabel: Mr. Charley, so tell me, what is the problem? Tell me why people do not like you.

Mr. C: Well Mabel, I am not an easy person to get along with as you can see. Mabel, you are right. I am a stubborn, old man. When anyone came around I would frighten them away. I am not a happy old man. I have lost everyone that loved me and cared for me. I am a lonely man who lives alone and who will die alone.

Mabel: But Mr. Charley, it doesn't have to be this way. You can make a change.

Mr. C: Me? Make a change? I have lost my wives and my children and friends. I have lost everything.

Mabel: It is not too late. Mr. Charley, I care about you. But I can't deal with your attitude. I'm too old for this. I have had a hard life, but you don't see me taking it out on you. My husband died with cancer. I lost my mom and dad in a fire. I am the only child. I lived alone for ten years. I do not have anyone.

(Mr. Charley looks at Mabel.)

Mr. C: Well, Mabel I guess you are right. I need to do something about my attitude, and I need to do it now.

(Mabel looks at Mr. Charley and smiles. She is so surprised that Mr. Charley is willing to give it a try.)

Mr. C: Mabel would you like to stay as my housekeeper?

Mabel: I.....I really don't know.

Mr. C: Mabel, please stay. I can learn a lot from you. Look at yourself. You are beautiful and a kind colored woman, friendly and respectful and have so much love inside, so caring and so understanding. I can learn from you.

Mabel: I don't know Mr. Charley. It's not going to be easy. You said that you didn't like colored folk and you want me to stay as your housekeeper. I don't know!

Mr. C: Mabel, please forgive me. I was wrong to talk to you like that. See, my father was killed by a colored man.

Mabel: So are you taking that out on me because of the color of my skin?

Mr. C: Yes....I did. I felt that all colored folks were trash. But Mabel, you proved me wrong. All colored folk are not the same at all. Please forgive me, Mabel.

(Mabel looks at Mr. Charley.)

Mabel: I don't know.

Mr. C: Mabel, please stay as my housekeeper.

Mabel: Mr. Charley I will forgive you but I don't feel that I should stay as your housekeeper.

Mr. C: Mabel stay and if you don't like being here with me, then you can leave. Please stay.

Mabel: Only on three conditions.

(Mr. Charley looks at Mabel so seriously.)

Mr. C: So, what are those three conditions, Mabel?

Mabel: 1. You can come and sit at the table for your meals, instead of me bringing it to you. Mr. Charley, there are things that you can do for yourself. You can pour your own cup of coffee. 2. You can walk to the store yourself for milk and bread. It will give you a chance to get to know your neighbors. 3. Stop sitting in that old white chair looking so mean at everyone. You are frightening everyone away. Say "Good morning. How are you today?"

(Mr. Charley just looks at Mabel; he doesn't like the idea, but he thinks to himself, "I will give it a try.")

Mr. C: Well Mabel, this will be a new beginning of our friendship. Now! How about that cup of coffee.

Mabel: Mr. Charley.....(Mabel puts her hand on one hip)

Mr. C: No Mabel, sit down. I will get **us** a cup of coffee. And from now on call me Charley.

The Trial of Pandora

by The 1994 G.E.D. Class at Project Place

Characters

Clerk

Pandora

Defense Attorneys

Prosecutor

Zeus

Epimetheus

Judge

Psychiatrist

Pandora's Mother

Pandora's Father

The Jury (played by members of the audience)

Scene

A Courtroom

Time

Now and Then

Clerk begins by telling the Myth of Pandora.

Clerk: Oyez, oyez. All rise. The honorable Judge Lael presiding.

Judge: Be seated. Will the court please come to order. The case before us today is The People vs. Pandora, a trial of mythic proportions. Prosecutor, will you make your opening statement.

Prosecutor: Thank you, Your Honor. Life was once a glorious paradise, but now things are different. Earthquakes, fires, hunger, hatred, fear, riots, murders, teens killing teens, children being abused, children killing parents, drive-by shootings, school violence.

How did the world get this way? Who is to blame? I tell you Pandora is to blame. I am here to prove that Pandora is responsible.

Judge: Thank you prosecutor. Defense, please begin.

Defense 1: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, Your Honor, during these proceedings I intend to prove two things: 1. The cause of the pain, sorrow and misery in the world is not because of women, Pandora, or for that matter, Eve. 2. Zeus is responsible for any problems plaguing the earth and he should be on trial, not Pandora.

My client, Pandora, did not curse the earth. In fact, she was created for this sole purpose. She was nonexistent until Zeus decided that Man should be punished. If it wasn't for this so-called, "King of Gods," we would all be living in eternal bliss. Hence ladies and gentlemen, Your Honor, I implore you to find Pandora innocent and dethrone Zeus without possible chance of re-election. It is said by men that women are too sensitive, too compassionate. Well, I feel that if Zeus had these two qualities none of this would have happened. Perhaps what this world needs is a little sensitivity and compassion as well as hope.

Defense 2: Ladies and gentlemen of the court, first take a look at my client, Pandora, a woman of beauty and charm. I ask you, does this sweet, innocent child look or act capable of bringing destruction to earth. She is a wise woman, with no limitation on her wisdom but one shortcoming -- uncontrolled curiosity which was given to her by the almighty Zeus himself. By giving her uncontrolled curiosity Zeus robbed her of Free Will.

Pandora: Go on girl!!

Judge: Order! I will not allow such outbursts in my court.

Pandora: Sorry, your honor.

Judge: Will the prosecutor please call your first witness.

Prosecutor: (to the clerk) Please call Zeus to the stand.

Clerk: Zeus, god of all gods, will you please come forward and be sworn in.

Pandora: Zeus! Oh boy, here goes the neighborhood!

Judge: Watch it, Pandora.

Prosecutor: What is your name and occupation?

Zeus: Zeus. I am God of all gods.

Prosecutor: Did you create Pandora?

Zeus: I believe I did.

Prosecutor: What qualities did you give her?

Zeus: Many gods and goddesses gave her gifts. Venus gave Pandora beauty and charm, Athena gave her wisdom, Apollo gave her a sunny personality and love of music, and I gave her curiosity.

Prosecutor: Why did you give her such a gift?

Zeus: Everyone should have curiosity.

Prosecutor: Did you give her any more gifts?

Zeus: I can't recall.

Prosecutor: A golden box, did you give her a golden box?

Zeus: Oh yes, a wedding present, I think.

Prosecutor: Did you tell Pandora clearly that she should not open the box?

Zeus: Yes, I remember telling her not to open the box.

Prosecutor: Did you tell her why not to open the box?

Zeus: I don't recall.

Prosecutor: Thank you, Zeus.

Judge: Defense, would you like to cross-examine?

Defense: Yes thank you. Zeus, how did you feel before you gave Pandora the box?

Zeus: With my hands, I believe.

Judge: Zeus, you better watch yourself.

Defense: Zeus, were you angry before you gave Pandora the golden box?

Zeus: Angry?

Defense: Were you angry at Prometheus for giving fire to man? Did you want to punish Prometheus for giving the fire and punish man for receiving the fire?

Prosecutor: Objection! The defense is badgering a god.

Judge: Overruled.

Defense: Were you angry at Prometheus for giving fire to man? Did you want to punish Prometheus for giving the fire and punish man for receiving the fire?

Zeus: ...Yes, I was a little angry.

Defense: What did you put in the box?

Zeus: The box? Oh, the box. Ah...um.....a

Defense: Isn't it true that you gave Pandora a box and isn't it a fact that you put anguish, hate, misery, hunger in the box. Isn't it true that you gave Pandora the box and a huge dose of curiosity? More than any other person in the world has?

Zeus: Well, it's hard to recall but yes.....hmmmmm.... yes ....I uh think I gave her a lovely box and curiosity, yes, a lovely quality.

Judge: Zeus, you must answer the questions.

Zeus: I'm trying. I can't remember everything, you know.

Defense: Why did you give her so much curiosity? Isn't it true that you gave Pandora curiosity so that she would open the box and all the horrible things would fly out of the box and punish mankind? And she would be blamed for bringing evil into the world. Pandora was created to do your dirty work.

Zeus: Well I .....I .....she didn't have to open the box. I distinctly remember telling her not to open the box. She didn't have to take it any farther than that.

Defense 2: (Puts a wrapped package on the table for all to see.) When you see something wrapped like this doesn't it make you want to open it? You were playing with her.

Zeus: No I wasn't playing with her. She could make her own decisions of what to do with the box.

Defense: We are through with this witness, Your Honor.

Judge: Clerk, call the next witness.

Clerk: I call Elizabeth, Pandora's mother, to the stand. Do you swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Elizabeth: I do.

Prosecutor: What is your name, please?

Elizabeth: Elizabeth. I am Pandora's mother.

Prosecutor: Can you tell us where Pandora got the special box?

Elizabeth: She got the box from one of the gods. I told her not to fool around with gods.

Prosecutor: Did she open the box?

Elizabeth: I came home and my daughter was crying, terribly upset. She said she had unlocked a box and she shouldn't have.

Defense: Before she met this god what kind of curiosity did she have?

Elizabeth: None. She was a good child with very little curiosity. A very good child.

Defense 1: Did the god give her the box when he gave her curiosity?

Elizabeth: Yes, I think he gave her curiosity then after that, the box. Or before. I'm not sure.

Defense 2: What did the box look like and was the box locked? Taped? Sealed in any way?

Elizabeth: It was a gold box, and it wasn't locked or taped shut.

Defense 2: Did she know what was inside the box?

Elizabeth: No, she did **not** know what was in the box.

Defense 1: Thank you Elizabeth. You may step down. Your Honor, may we please call Dr. Zhivago, a psychiatrist.

Clerk: Dr. Zhivago to the stand please. Dr. Zhivago do yo swear to tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Dr. Zhivago: I do.

Defense 2: How long have you been practicing psychiatry?

Dr. Zhivago: 14 years.

Defense 1: Can you tell us what you think of curiosity in the young?

Dr. Zhivago: Some curiosity is very good for learning and exploring but too much curiosity is very dangerous for the young. If you give a child or a young adult a box, they must know what is inside. They are not afraid of what might be inside; they want to open the box. They **must** find out what's inside.

Defense 2: How do you see Pandora? What kind of woman is she? Is she an evil woman who wants to hurt people?

Dr. Zhivago: I found that Pandora is a kind, young woman who enjoys caring and being cared about. She is not evil.

Prosecutor: I want to question the doctor.

Judge: You'll be given your turn. Defense, are you finished questioning the doctor?

Defense 2: For the moment, your honor.

Judge: Prosecutor, you may question the doctor.

Prosecutor: Thank you, Your Honor. You say Pandora was given curiosity? Wasn't she also given beauty and charm by Venus and wisdom from Athena?

Dr. Zhivago: I believe so.

Prosecutor: Wouldn't wisdom overpower curiosity?

Dr. Zhivago: I believe the power of curiosity was stronger than she could handle and overpowered her wisdom.

Prosecutor: No more questions. I would like to call Pandora to the stand.

Clerk: Pandora! Please take the stand. Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?

Pandora: I do.

Prosecutor: State your name please.

Pandora: Pandora.

Prosecutor: Pandora, I'd like to know where you got the golden box.

Pandora: From Zeus. He gave it to me.

Prosecutor: When Zeus gave you the box did he tell you not to open it?

Pandora: Yes. He told me not to open the box, but he didn't tell me what was in the box.

Prosecutor: Just answer the question.

Pandora: Okay.

Prosecutor: What prompted you to open the box after you were warned by Zeus not to open the box.

Pandora: My curiosity. Giving me a closed box and telling me not to open it was like telling a dog, "don't bark."

Prosecutor: Curiosity. Hmmm. What was in the box?

Pandora: Hm, Hm, Hm, ugly things.

Prosecutor: What did you do?

Pandora: I opened the box, thinking there was a diamond in it, and only ugly things came out. I closed the box as quickly as I could.

Prosecutor: Was there anything left in the box?

Pandora: Hope.

Prosecutor: Were you alone when you opened the box?

Pandora: Yes.

Prosecutor: Tell me, are you married?

Pandora: Yes. I'm married to a broken-down old man.

Prosecutor: What is your husband's name?

Pandora: Epimetheus, that's what he told me.

Prosecutor: Thank you. That's all for now Your Honor.

Judge: Defense, do you wish to question the witness?

Defense 1: Yes I do wish to question the witness. Pandora, who created you?

Pandora: Zeus, the evil old Zeus.

Defense 1: Do you know why?

Pandora: No. I don't have the slightest idea.

Defense 1: When Zeus gave you the box did you have any idea what was inside?

Pandora: No. I didn't have the slightest idea.

Defense: What did the box look like?

Pandora: It was simple and gold and beautiful and caught my beautiful eye.

Defense: Because it was beautiful on the outside did you think it was beautiful on the inside?

Pandora: Yes.

Defense: How long did you have the box without opening it?

Pandora: Quite a long time.

Defense: Why did you finally open it?

Pandora: I just got too curious.

Defense 2: Explain to the court what kind of child you were. Were you an angry, destructive, miserable child? Growing up, did you hang on the corner?

Pandora: No. I came from a loving family. I have always loved people, animals, plants.

Defense 2: Would you say there's a lot of love in your heart?

Pandora: Yes, yes! Except for Zeus!

Defense: Did you have any animosity toward man in your heart?

Pandora: No.

Defense 2: Tell us how you felt when you opened the box and all these ugly things came out. Were you scared?

Pandora: I was horrified when I saw what happened and I couldn't believe it. A god had given me the box, Lord have mercy, and a good god at that - at least I thought he was a good god.

Defense 2: Thank you . That is all.

Judge: Prosecution, any questions?

Prosecution: Yes, Your Honor. Pandora were you an obedient young woman?

Pandora: Yes.

Prosecutor: When your parents told you to do something you obeyed?

Pandora: Yes, I did.

Prosecutor: Now, would that same obedience carry over with Zeus? Didn't he tell you NOT to open the box?

Pandora: Yes he did, but he didn't tell me why.

Prosecutor: Did you know Epimetheus was told not to accept gifts or that you were a gift from Zeus to punish mankind?

Pandora: No.

Prosecutor: What were your feelings when you received the box from Zeus?

Pandora: I was real excited.

Prosecutor: Where did you put it?

Pandora: On a high shelf.

Prosecutor: Why on a high shelf?.

Pandora: To keep it safe.

Prosecutor: But you didn't keep it safe there. Am I correct, didn't you say at one time, "one little peek won't hurt?"

Pandora: I thought if a gift comes from a god I thought it must be something wonderful.

Prosecutor: So by your hand, you opened the box?

Pandora: Zeus, the God of gods, gave me the box and a huge amount of curiosity, what could I do?

Prosecutor: You are saying that you're not responsible for your own actions?

Pandora: Well you see....I...

Prosecutor: Are you responsible for your own actions, yes or no? I want a yes or no answer.

Pandora: (pause) Don't push me...my answer is..... Yes I am.

Prosecutor: You are responsible for your own actions?

Pandora: Yes, yes.

Prosecutor: I am through, Your Honor.

Defense: Pandora, what is a gift?

Pandora: It is something nice.

Defense: Given with kindness and good intentions. Receiving this gift, did you have negative thoughts? Did you anticipate filth, sorrow, hate and misery coming from the box?

Pandora: No, I didn't!

Defense: And if you did would you have opened it?

Pandora: No!

Defense: I have no further questions. Thank you.

Judge: Prosecutor, do you wish to call another witness?

Prosecutor: Yes. I'd like to call Epimetheus, Pandora's husband.

Clerk: Epimetheus. Please come forward. Do you swear to tell the whole truth.....

Epimetheus: Yes, I do.

Prosecutor: State your name and occupation.

Epimetheus: Epimetheus E., and I do what I do best.

Prosecutor: What is your relationship to Pandora?

Epimetheus: Pandora is my loving, nagging wife.

Prosecutor: Did you know of the box she kept on the shelf?

Epimetheus: I knew a box had been given to my wife by Zeus.

Prosecutor: Did you think about opening the box?

Epimetheus: No. It was my wife's private gift from the gods.

Defense: (yells out) He wasn't given curiosity.

Judge: Order. Don't let me hear that again.

Prosecutor: Is it true that your wife opened the box?

Epimetheus: Pandora's been my wife for twenty years....twenty years of unselfish devotion. During that time she has been an upstanding citizen, loving friends and foes alike. Prometheus is the traitor to Zeus. He disobeyed Zeus and gave fire to man. He is responsible for harming mankind. Pandora was an unwitting accomplice.

Judge: Just answer the question. Don't make speeches.

Epimetheus: Zeus knew exactly what was going to happen. Being a god, Zeus could see the future. He knew what would befall man. Zeus is evil, not Pandora.

Judge: That's enough!

Epimetheus: I just think -

Judge: SILENCE! Prosecutor, proceed.

Prosecutor: Why didn't Pandora's wisdom overpower curiosity?

Epimetheus: I don't know.

Prosecutor: Are you saying curiosity is a bad thing?

Epimetheus: Curiosity is a double edged sword; curiosity is good and bad.

Prosecutor: Thank you.

Judge: Defense, questions?

Defense: Yes. Epimetheus, when your brother gave fire to humans, what was Zeus's mood?

Epimetheus: He was very mad at Prometheus and mad at man for accepting fire.

Defense: When was Pandora created?

Epimetheus: Soon after Prometheus gave the world fire.

Defense: I want the truth and nothing but the truth, was Pandora created to punish men?

Epimetheus: Well, think about what Zeus did to Jason and the Argonauts, and his own brother Hercules. He's not a nice god! He gave Pandora curiosity that she couldn't control and a box full of misery. He likes to be in control. Zeus is guilty of premeditated and malevolent destruction.

Prosecutor: OBJECTION !!! Hearsay!!

Judge: Epimetheus, stop making speeches. Defense, proceed.

Defense: Yes, Your Honor. Epimetheus, did your wife show remorse after she opened the box?

Epimetheus: She most certainly did. She was blubbering like a fish when I came through the door.

Defense: Thank you. Your honor I have a few more questions.

Judge: Proceed.

Defense: Did you forget your brother's warning not to accept a gift from Zeus?

Epimetheus: Yes.

Defense: Thank you.

Judge: Prosecutor, do you wish to question Epimetheus again?

Prosecutor: Yes. Epimetheus, is curiosity good or bad?

Epimetheus: Both.

Prosecutor: Are you curious?

Epimetheus: Yes, I think I'm a curious person.

Prosecutor: You knew about the box on the shelf?

Epimetheus: Yes, I did know about it.

Prosecutor: You didn't touch the box, right? Did you want to open the box?

Epimetheus: Once in a while I thought about it, but it wasn't my box to open.

Prosecutor: Thank you. That's all for now.

Judge: Defense, do you want to reexamine?

Defense 2: Yes, thank you, Your Honor. Epimetheus, you just said you are a curious person but you didn't open the box.

Epimetheus: Yes. I was curious, but Pandora's curiosity was different from mine. Zeus gave her a curiosity that was beyond her control, a curiosity

that was tainted with temptation, like Eve and Snow White. She was not in control of her own actions. She was a victim of a stronger force. She was deprived of free will. She needs our support and sympathy, not punishment.

Defense 2: Oh, and who do you think needs to be punished?

Epimetheus: Zeus plotted to hurt man. He is responsible for all the destruction and unhappiness and is using poor Pandora as a scapegoat. He sent poor Pandora out to unknowingly do his dirty work and now takes no responsibility for his actions. We shouldn't let this happen.

Judge: Thanks for your judgement. That will be enough. We have a jury you know. Any other witnesses?

Defense: I'd like to call Pandora's father.

Judge: Call Pandora's father.

Clerk: Will Pandora's father come to the stand. Do you swear to tell the truth?

Defense: What is your name?

Father: Pandora's father.

Defense: Do you have any children?

Father: I have a daughter named Pandora, who was underage when she met Zeus. And I just want to say I don't believe in the gods. I'm an atheist and furthermore -

Defense: Just answer the question please. Now a little about your daughter. What kind of child was Pandora?

Father: She was a very obedient child and very curious, very curious.

Defense: Was she a frisky child-- hard to handle? Like if you said go to bed would she give you back talk?

Father: Definitely not! She was no trouble. She was a very good child and a very cute child too.

Defense: And would you say she was a loving child or a troubled child?

Father: She was very loving.

Defense: Are you trying to tell us Pandora was an angel?

Father: No, I didn't say she was an angel, but I did say she was a sweet child. And we tried to give her everything.

Defense: So you're saying when Pandora was young she was a sweet, loving child with a normal amount of curiosity?

Father: She was fine until she met Zeus.

Defense: Thank you.

Judge: Prosecutor, do you wish to question the witness?

Prosecutor: Yes I do Your Honor. You are Pandora's father?

Father: Yes.

Prosecutor: And you don't believe in the gods?

Father: That's right.

Prosecutor: How is it then that you don't believe in the gods, but your daughter does.

Father: Let's just say she was enticed.

Prosecutor: Did you see Zeus give your daughter the box or the gift of curiosity?

Father: No I did not, but my wife told me what happened.

Prosecutor: Your wife told you what happened?

Father: Yes.

Prosecutor: Did your daughter open the box and let out all the evils?

Father: That's what I've been told.

Prosecutor: Did you see her do that?

Father: No. Her husband told me what happened. And I think...

Prosecutor: I don't care what you think. I'll tell you what I think. I don't think your daughter is obedient at all. She was spoiled and disobedient, and she's going to jail!

(Outbreak! Everybody starts yelling.)

Judge: Order, order. This better not happen again or the lot of you will be held in contempt. Do you have any more questions, Prosecutor, and watch yourself!

Prosecutor: No more questions. No more witnesses.

Judge: Pandora's father, you are dismissed. It is time for closing arguments. Defense?

Defense 1: Your Honor, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you've heard both sides of the argument. Zeus admitted giving Pandora a box. A beautiful box. He gave it to her as a so-called gift. In this box he placed all types of horrible, negative traits. When he gave her this "gift" he gave her an order not to open this box, but he also gave her another trait, curiosity. That curiosity was meant to overpower the order. Zeus was fully aware of this. Also by his own volition the Almighty stated that he was angry with man for accepting fire from the god Prometheus. I ask you this, if Zeus never intended for Pandora to open the box, why did he give her curiosity and furthermore, why did he give her the "gift" in the first place?

Defense 2: Your Honor, ladies and gentlemen of the jury. You've heard the prosecutor try and convince you that this child, a child of the gods no less, a child of norma! -- whatever you call normal -- upbringing, not one of abuse or neglect or abandonment. She was not beaten nor did she go hungry. She had both mother and father who loved her. Even in having both parents the gods gave her wonderful gifts, even some not so wonderful, even downright despicable gifts. But this child of peace, love and warmth for the world could not and would not, I tell you,

knowingly bring death and destruction upon the earth. You've heard from our witnesses' testimony on her character, from her parents, what she was like as a child, even testimony from Pandora herself stating that if she'd known what was in that box she certainly would not have opened it. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I say it should not be Pandora on trial here, but the person who put her here, the very person who's mad at mankind, the very person, Your Honor, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, who saw fit to create the child with the intention to bring this and poverty and pain, hunger, this deadly destruction upon the earth. How you may ask? Well ladies and gentlemen, Your Honor, you take an innocent child, give her all these wonderful things, beauty, wisdom, grace, the whole nine yards, just wonderful things in this beautiful shining box, and, ladies and gentlemen, you give this child curiosity-- not put this one trait, Your Honor, in the box, but instill this in Pandora herself. Now ladies and gentlemen of the jury, Your Honor, I don't know about you, but giving the beautiful box to a child with overwhelming curioslty coming from the King of Kings, the King of all gods, Zeus... Come on people of the court, the only result was for the child to open the box -- the exact result which Zeus was seeking. Intentionally raping and seducing the mind of this innocent child who he created specifically for that reason. So I ask that the court, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, come to the only verdict that's conceivable here -- NOT GUILTY, not guilty by reason of rape and seduction, manipulation not of the body but of the innocence of her mind. We intend to bring charges against Zeus at a later date, charges to show that even a god must not be above the law, even the very laws they may write. I rest my case; the fate of Pandora rests in your hands. Your Honor, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.

Prosecutor: Pandora is guilty! And her family is guilty too. She had no business opening the box. She had been told not to open the box but she did. You heard her say it. She let out all the evils of the world and we will all suffer because of her act. She must be held responsible for her action. Pandora must pay for what she did. She must be found guilty and sent to jail.

Judge: Now ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you have heard both sides of the case and now you must find her guilty or innocent beyond a shadow of a doubt. Please go to the jury room and make your decision.

(Break.)

Judge: (to jury) How do you find Pandora?

Jury: (They announce guilty or innocent.)

Judge: Pandora, the jury has found you (guilty or innocent) (You are free to go or You will be sentenced in the morning.)

Clerk: Court is over until tomorrow at 10:00. Thank you for your attention.

The Judge exits.

Lorenza Michielli and Kelly Keough, in rehersal. Roger Gordy, photographer.

Lorenza Michielli has "great plans" as Josie Jones in "The Jones' American Dream. (Hubbard Hall, North End Union).

Nicola La Polla as Paolo Rossi Jones in "The Jones' American Dream", "Who Cares?" (Hubbard Hall, North End Union).

Lorenza Michielli and Amad Lababi in "The Jones' American Dream". Roger Gordy, photographer.

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Amad Lababi as Patrick Jones in "The Jones' American Dream" finds a lot of money! (Hubbard Hall, North End Union).

Betzaida Barreto as Maria in "The Jones' American Dream", "I want to marry him."

Winding up "The Jones' American Dream" at the North End Union. Roger Gordy, photographer.

The Jones' American Dream

by the United ESL Theatre Troupe

Characters

Paolo Rossi Jones

Madonna Maria Magdalena Jones

Angel 1

Angel 2

Josie Jones

Patrick Jones

Scene

An Apartment in Boston, Massachusetts

The curtain is closed on the stage. All Scene I action tales place in front of the curtain. Paolo enters from behind the curtain, stage left.

Act I, Scene I

Paolo: My name is Paolo Rossi Jones. I am an Italian soccer player, playing in the World Cup for Italy in Spain. It's 1982, I score the most goals. Italy wins the World Cup. I meet this beautiful girl. I am in love. I want to get married. Its a nice day...beautiful weather we're having, isn't it.

(Paolo exits center stage, enter Maria stage right.)

Maria: My name is Madonna Maria Magdalena. I am 24 years old. I live in Madrid. It's the World Cup this weekend. I hope to meet some of the players. Oops! I run into Paolo Rossi. He is the most interesting player. He scores two goals in the final game to win the World Cup! I fall in love with him. I want to marry him.

(Maria exists center stage,enter Angel 1 and 2 from stage left and right.)

Angel 1: Ciao!

Angel 2: Hola!

Angel 1: English?

Angel 2: Yes

Angel 1 & 2: Hi.

Angel 1: Did you see those two people?

Angel 2: Yes. What do you think? Did you like them? I mean, do you think they would make good parents?

Angel 1: Yes, I loved them. So, uh... Would you like to be my brother?

Angel 2: Yes, of course, would you like to be my sister?

Angel 1: Yes but ..who'll be born first?

Angel 1+2: ME!

Angel 1: No, me.

Angel 2: Come on, please!

Angel 1: Excuse me, be a gentleman!

Angel 2: I am, but I'd like to be your older brother.

Angel 1: Really? You would? O.K. You'll work for me in my teenage years.

Angel 2: O.K. I'll go first.

Angel 1: I'll be after you...one year.

Angel 2: Oh yes, please do not wait much longer to be born.

Angel 1: I won't. Which name would you like?

Angel 2: What do you prefer for me?

Angel 1: For you? Patrick. For me?

Angel 2: Josie. What do you think? Do you like it?

Angel 1: Yes! Josie, Josie, Josie Jones.

Angel 2: That's music in my ear. What do you want to be when you grow up?

Angel 1: Oh, I'd like to be a ballerina in the ballet... and you?

Angel 2: I'd like to be an actor, like Jack Nicholson.

Angel 1: Oh, a star is born!

Angel 2: And a beauty to adore. See you in one year!

Angel 1: Ciao!

Angel 2: Adios

Angel 1 & 2: Goodbye!

(Both exit through the curtains.)

Act I, Scene II

(It's seventeen years later. The year is 1999. The Jones' are in their apartment in Boston. The curtain opens to reveal the family. All are frozen. Josie unfreezes.)

Josie: My name is Josie Jones. I'm 16 years old. I just corrupted my mother to agree for a nose ring and new hair color...green...She defended me with Daddy because he doesn't like it. You know, he's old, antique. My boyfriend is the person who I like the most. He's so ...everything for me. He is the only person who understands me. I'm so afraid now that his situation will get worse, you know, he's in jail now. What a stupid thing, just for a broken window and a few beers. Oh, I hate police! They give my family a lot of problems,

all the time. Until now, I haven't done anything special, you know. I have to go to school until I'm 16 years old, but I have great plans for my future life...you'll see.

Paolo: My name is Paolo Rossi Jones. I hate my wife's cooking. It's disgusting. She is beautiful, but her cooking... I wish I had money like I used to so I could have a good time. We're poor now. I got this bad leg. It's broken. It's killing me. I'm in agony, especially with this bad weather we're having, you know. I can't find work with this bad leg. It's terrible. I got two kids. I don't even know their names. The girl, my daughter, she's beautiful like her mother. She's a teenager. She does funny things. My son is...., but brainy in school ...a scientist, maybe?

Maria: My name is Maria, but my friends call me Margarita. I work. I'm a stripper. He married me because of my looks. But I told him in the beginning that I can't cook well. He promised me he was going to show me how to cook. He promised me! I don't want any arguments when we have dinner or in the future when we sit down with the kids. I like to travel a lot and take trips to different places. I like a lot of money, and I'm a very happy lady. I fear that my children will find out the kind of mother I am. I've learned English though, and have more confidence in myself to write English. I give thanks to my teacher for her friendship and giving me confidence in myself.

Patrick: My name is Patrick. I'm very disappointed with my family. I like to study. I like to be somebody. But my father and my mother, they don't understand me. I feel sometimes in the family, I'm the stupid one. My sister, she's a little crazy. She has so many problems. Oh, I'm only 17 years old, and I feel like I'm 40.

Act I, Scene III

One morning in summer, Maria comes home at 7 A.M. Everyone is up getting ready for the day, having breakfast.

Paolo: Where have you been 'til now?

Maria: I worked late. Somebody has to work to pay the bills and buy the food to feed you and the kids.

Josie: Please Daddy, don't pick on Mommy. She is dead tired.

Patrick: Mommy has been working all night!

Paolo: That is an excuse.

Maria: Paolo, why don't you get off your... and find yourself a job?

Josie: Please Mommy! Please Daddy! Why do you have to argue all the time?

Paolo: Hey you Josie, don't interfere when I'm talking to your mother.

Patrick: Come on Daddy, let's eat! We're going to be late for school.

Paolo: It's not fair! It's not that I don't want to work, but this leg is killing me, and nobody wants an old man to work.

Josie: Wow! Dad this breakfast is good! not like Mommy's!

Maria: It's not my fault. Your Daddy said that he was going to teach me how to cook. He never did. He never keeps his promises.

Patrick: Mommy, can I have some money?

Maria: Of course baby, only your father can't ask me.

Paolo: Hey you Josie, what have you done to your hair? It's all green!

Josie: Please Daddy, leave me alone.

Paolo: What kind of kids have I brought up? Where have you been 'til now?

(All leave the stage except Patrick.)

Act I, Scene IV

Patrick: I think I'm late. I don't want to buy a coffee out. I prepare my coffee here. I prepare my coffee and I'm late. I want to put the sugar on *(he drinks)* ...What's that? OOOOOH my God! It's salt. Shit! I'll buy a coffee at school.

(Josie enters stage right, they pack their bags and go out stage left. Maria and Paolo enter stage left.)

Act I, Scene V

Maria: I am coming home. This man is following me. I speed up a little, he speeds up a little. I stop at a red light, he stops at the red light. I'm thinking that he's chasing me. I turn around! Oops! I bump into a middle aged white man. I'm so sorry I bumped into you. "Don't be so sorry!" said my cooking teacher! I've been taking cooking classes. See, tonight we're having white tomatoes!

(Josie comes home from school, enters stage right.)

Josie: White tomatoes! Oh Mom, this is worse than what my boyfriend eats in jail. *(Comes downstage, center)* My poor Poochie, he's my little puppy love. He will be free soon, I know. We have great, great plans! We'll make them real tonight. I'll pack my suitcases. I'll escape from my window and my boyfriend will escape from jail and meet me at midnight under the bridge. Anything will be better than this place. I'm a prisoner in this house with a handicapped father, an unable mother, especially in cooking and a perfect...stupid brother.

(Patrick enters stage right.)

Patrick: (To the audience) Stupid crazy sister. *(To Maria)* That smells delicious. I missed you last night Mommy. Where were you?

Maria: Working.

Patrick: Oh, all the night, all the night?

Maria: All the night and all the night, Patrick.

Patrick: Mommy, Mommy, I want to ask you something.

Maria: What is it, baby?

Patrick: Can I have a date?

Maria: Sure Patrick. Just a moment, I'm cooking some white tomatoes and dates right now.

Patrick: No, Mommy, not the little dry fruit. I want a real date.

Maria: Patrick! But how do you expect me to find you a real date?

Patrick: Come on Mommy. You know, you have a lot of girlfriends at work.

Maria: Here Patrick, have some white tomatoes.

Josie: Why don't you ask Daddy? He got her. He did a good job, but not her.

Patrick: Dad!

(Enter Paolo stage left.)

Paolo: Did I hear my name?

Patrick: Dad, I need a date.

Paolo: Son, you're bringing me back...

(Paolo pulls a cigarette out of his pocket and lights it. Patrick goes into his pocket and pulls out a notepad and pencil. Neither sees what the other is doing.)

Paolo: Now when I was a young man...

Patrick: What are you doing?!

Paolo: What do you mean?!

Patrick: (Points to the sign on the wall.) NO smoking allowed!

Paolo: Who's the boss?

Patrick: She's the boss.

Paolo: Who wears the pants?

Josie: Who brings home the bacon?

Maria: Who pays the bills?

Paolo: Who cares? My son's only chance to become a man...gone in a smoke.

Act I, Scene VII

(It's 11:30 p.m. Everyone is asleep. Josie is getting ready to make her escape.)

Josie: Oh! I'm finally leaving. I'm leaving! I'm leaving! My bags are packed and the window's wide open. But first, I must check my list. Nobody would believe me, but I'm an organized woman. My black lipstick - check. My black nailpolish - check. My nose ring and my green hair color - all the things that my father hates. Oh yeah, my music! Can't forget my Nirvana tapes - check. Money, yes, for what my mother gives me! And my condoms, if my mother only knew. What's left? I know, I'm forgetting something important. Ooh, food! there better be something in the refrigerator besides white tomatoes.

(Josie exits stage left.)

Patrick: OOAA! I'm so thirsty. It's the middle of the night, and I'm so thirsty. I got to get something to drink. It's freezing in here. Look at this. Why is that window open? OOH! What's that? A case? Wow, I look right. I look left. Nobody's here. Good. What a heavy case. Good. I look right. I look left. Nobody is here. Wow! A lot of money. I'm a rich man. Dad will be so proud of me!

Maria: Wake up! Wake up! It's time to go to work!

Patrick: Oh my God. That was only a dream! But, I could've used the money.

Act I, Scene VIII

(Everyone gathers around the breakfast table.)

Paolo: Breakfast is ready! Come on kids. Come on honey. Wow! What a dream...fame, riches, poverty. It's a dog's life. Well, where there's a life, there's hope. It's a nice day. Crazy weather we're having, isn't it?

(The family sits down to eat and their loving chatter is drowned out by the song, "Counting Crows, Mr. Jones." The curtains close.)

Elsa Mc Cann, discussing the Setting the Stage Project at local 26. Paul Katz, photographer.

Sharon Carey, introducing the Project Place participants. Roger Gordy, photographer.

Kelly Keough, introducing "The Jones' American Dream", explains "Intuition is part of the creative process." (Coolidge Corner Library)

James E. Roberts, coordinator of the Setting the Stage for Literacy project. Roger Gordy, photographer.

Setting the Stage for Literacy Project staff: James E. Roberts, A.L.R.I.; Deborah Abraham, Public Library of Brookline; Kelly Keough, North End Union; Elsa McCann, Local 26; Sharon Carey, Project Place; David Rosen, A.L.R.I.

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